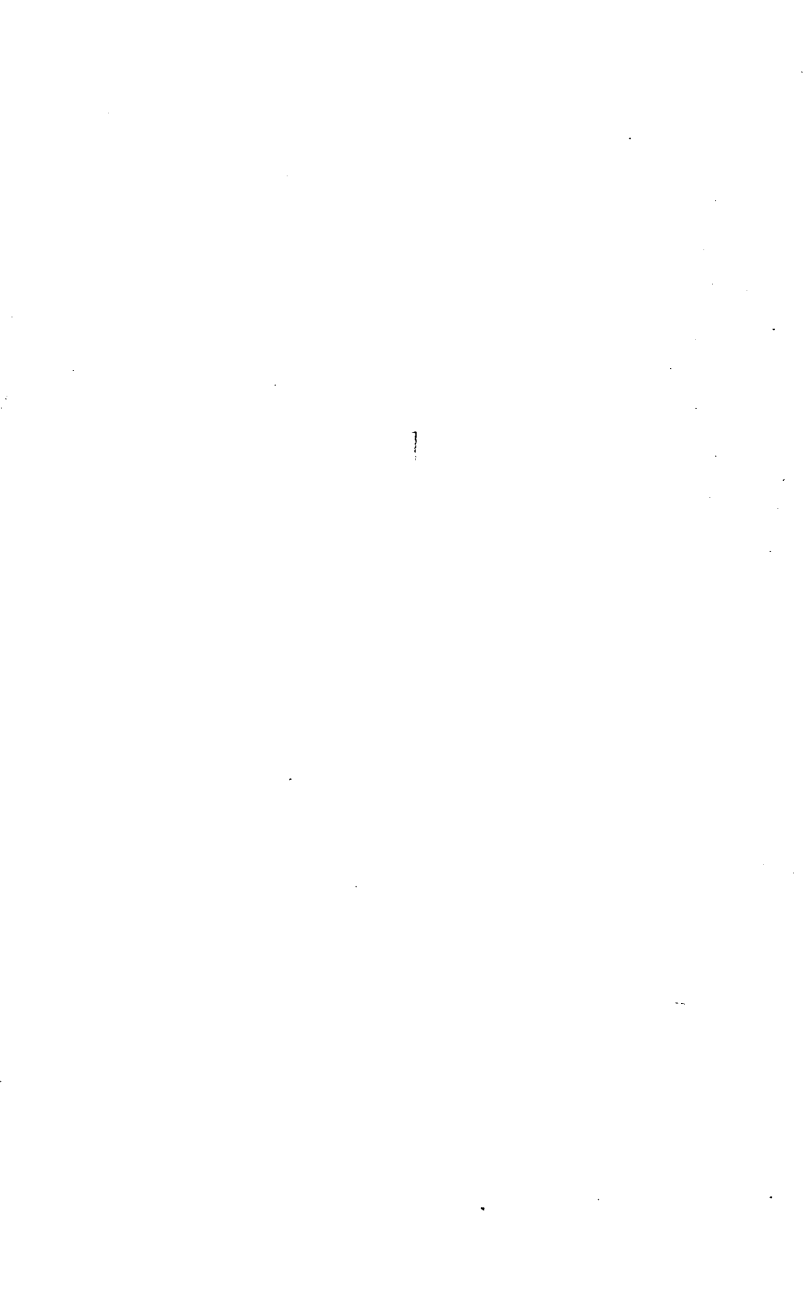
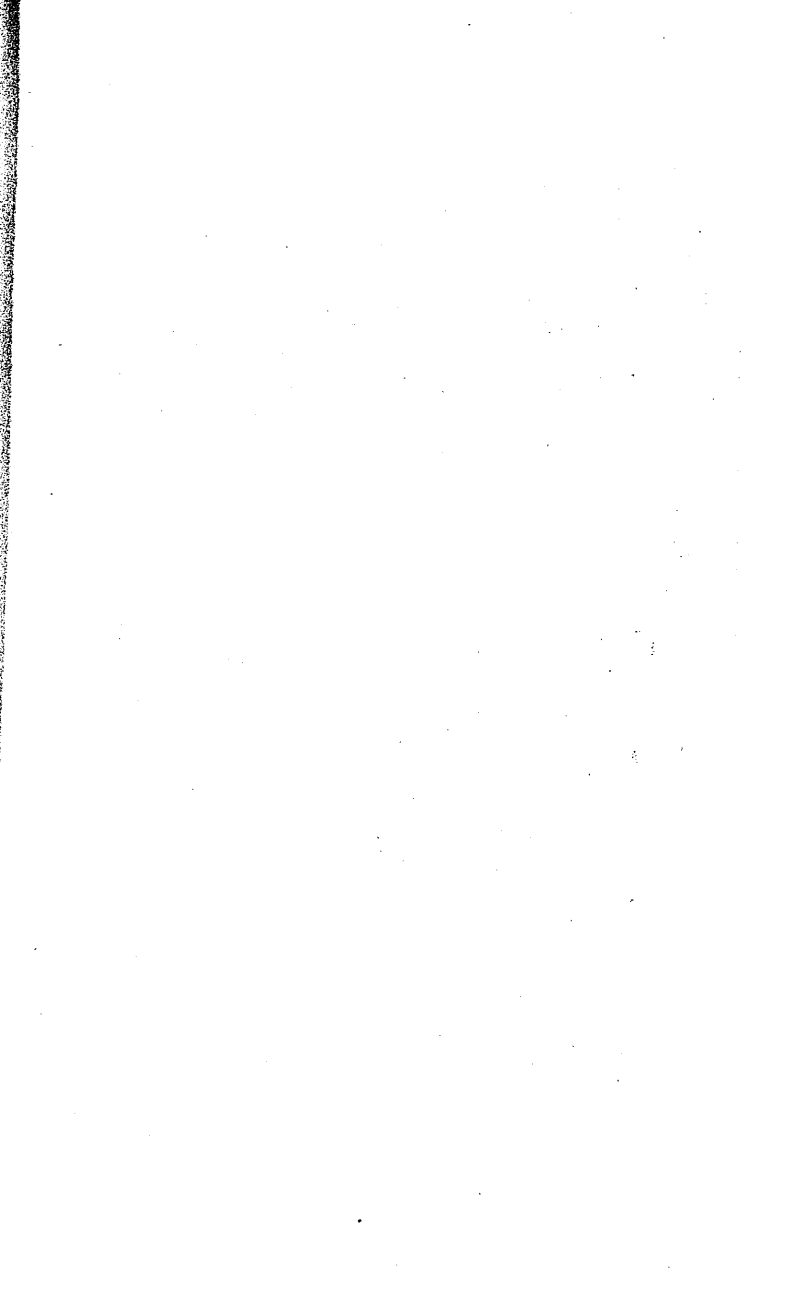


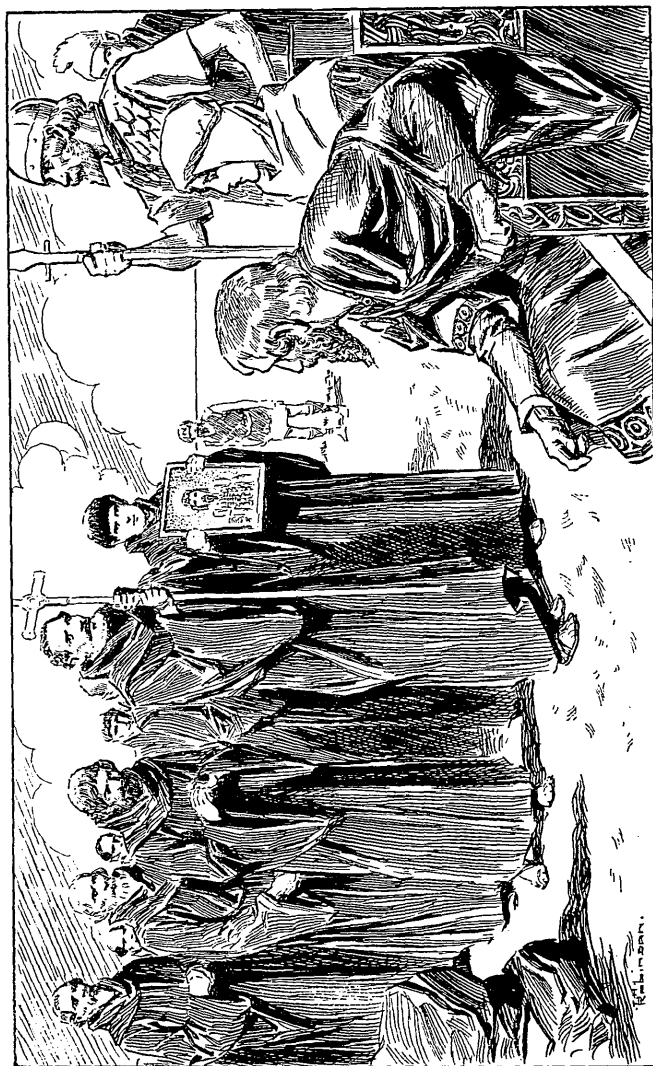
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THE CONVERSION OF THE ENGLISH







Frontispiece

S. AUGUSTINE ADVANCING WITH HIS MONKS TO MEET KING ETHELBEET AND QUEEN BERTHA.

THE CONVERSION OF THE ENGLISH

BY THE REV.
H. CURTOIS
\\

WITH MANY ILLUSTRATIONS

LONDON
SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING
CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE
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Ch. Hist.

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PREFACE

THIS work requires some explanation. It is an attempt to place in the hands of the general reader the substance of Bede's "Ecclesiastical History." No Church in Christendom has a more complete account of its earliest stage than the Church of England. Yet, as Montalembert points out of S. Oswald, one of its most saintly founders:

"Where shall we find in all history a hero more approaching the ideal, more widely gifted, more worthy of eternal remembrance, and it must be added more completely forgotten?" ("Monks of the West," iv., 33).

It is to remove this reproach by making the monks, and bishops, and kings who took so great a part in the beginnings of English Christianity—household and familiar names—that this book has been written.

But to achieve this some sacrifices have had to be made, which must be clearly emphasized. While the immortal stories, which give such a unique charm to Bede's "History," have been told more or less at length, many details and facts of supreme interest to the scholar and the student have been omitted. This was inevitable in a work designed for popular use; and to some extent this drawback is repaired by a system of supplements, adopted as a means of inserting additional matter of general interest, without interfering with the main scope of the work. But it must be pointed out, that this arrangement has no justification in Bede's "History."

For these omissions the reader, who wishes to pursue the subject further, is referred to Bede's "Ecclesiastical

History" itself, especially as edited with notes by Mr. Plummer, in his "*Bædæ Opera Ecclesiastica*"; and also to Professor Bright's "*Early English Church History*." Without the guidance of these two writers, especially the last, from whose book all disputed dates and the spelling of names are almost uniformly taken, this work would never have been attempted. Besides these two scholars, there are also many others whose services can only be briefly acknowledged here.

While Bede's "*Ecclesiastical History*" is the source of the bulk of this work, additional information, which enlarges our knowledge of the beginnings of English Christianity, has been inserted from various authorities, some early, some late. The references to the most important of these authorities, as well as to Bede, are given below the heading of each chapter. In this way it is hoped that the reader will easily recognize where he is indebted to Bede himself, or to other writers in the same field.

In conclusion, it is the earnest hope of the author that a more familiar acquaintance with the foundation of the Church in this land may increase the reverence and affection in which the Church of England is held by all her devout children, and aid the great work begun by S. Wilfrid in her earliest years of handing on to others that which we have ourselves first received.

CROXTON VICARAGE,
THETFORD.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION* - - - - -	1
 PART I.—CANTERBURY MISSION: S. AUGUSTINE AND HIS SUC- CESSORS - - - - -	4
I.-IV. MISSION IN KENT - - - - -	4
V. EXTENSION TO LONDON AND ESSEX. ITS FAILURE	24
VI.-VIII. EXTENSION IN NORTHUMBRIA - - - - -	29
IX. FURTHER EXTENSION IN EAST ANGLIA. COLLAPSE OF THE MISSION IN NORTHUMBRIA. MISSIONS IN KENT AND EAST ANGLIA ALONE SURVIVE -	44
X. THE ANCIENT HEATHENISM - - - - -	48
 PART II.—LINDISFARNE MISSION: S. AIDAN AND HIS SUCCESSORS	52
XI.-XIV. SECOND MISSION IN NORTHUMBRIA - - - - -	52
XIII. INDEPENDENT MISSION IN WESSEX - - - - -	65
XV. MISSION IN MERCA. SECOND MISSION IN ESSEX	74
XVI.* BATTLE OF WINWIDFIELD. ALL ENGLAND CON- VERTED SAVE HEATHEN SUSSEX - - - - -	79
XVII.-XIX.* COUNCIL OF WHITBY. THE EASTER CONTROVERSY AND ITS RESULT - - - - -	84
 PART III.—ORGANIZATION: (a) FIRST STEPS - - - - -	99
XX.*-XXI. THE COMING OF THEODORE - - - - -	99
XXII.* COUNCIL OF HERTFORD. SMALLER SEES ADVO- CATED; AND CARRIED OUT IN EAST ANGLIA -	111
(b) NORTHUMBRIA: SMALLER SEES - - - - -	117
XXIII.-XXIV.* WILFRID'S CAREER. HIS QUARREL WITH THEODORE - - - - -	117
XXV.*-XXVI. WILFRID'S FIRST EXILE. CONVERSION OF SUSSEX - - - - -	130
XXVII.*-XXVIII. COUNCIL OF HATFIELD. LEADING MEN IN NORTHUMBRIA, AND THEODORE'S POLICY -	143

* Additional Supplement.

	PAGE
(c) MERCIA AND WESSEX: SMALLER SEES - - -	160
XXIX. SMALLER SEES IN MERCIA. SMALLER SEES IN WESSEX. ANALYSIS OF THEODORE'S POLICY -	160
PART IV.—CONCLUSION - - - - -	168
XXX. THEODORE THE PHILOSOPHER. HIS DEATH. DEBT OF ENGLISH CHRISTIANITY TO THEODORE -	168
XXXI. WILFRID'S SECOND EXILE. HIS DEATH. IMPORT- ANCE OF THE CAUSE OF WILFRID - - -	175
APPENDIX - - - - -	181
LIST OF DATES - - - - -	191
AUTHORITIES - - - - -	193
INDEX - - - - -	195

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

FIG.		PAGE
	S. AUGUSTINE ADVANCING WITH HIS MONKS - - -	<i>Frontispiece</i>
1.	POPE GREGORY AND THE ENGLISH SLAVES - - -	6
2.	S. AUGUSTINE LANDING IN BRITAIN - - -	10
3.	S. MARTIN'S CHURCH, CANTERBURY - - -	13
4.	S. PANCRAS RUINS, CANTERBURY - - -	17
5.	S. AUGUSTINE RECEIVING THE BRITISH BISHOPS - - -	20
6.	S. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL - - - - -	25
7.	ANGLO-SAXON ART. A PAGE FROM A MANUSCRIPT ("ALCUIN'S BIBLE") - - - - -	36
8.	"DOST THOU REMEMBER THIS SIGN?" - - -	38
9.	IONA AND ITS MONASTERY - - - - -	55
10.	PRESENT-DAY RUINS OF LINDISFARNE - - -	56
11.	S. AIDAN LEAVING IONA - - - - -	57
12.	S. AIDAN PREACHING - - - - -	60
13.	"MAY THIS HAND NEVER GROW OLD" - - -	62
14.	BAMBOROUGH CASTLE AT THE PRESENT DAY - - -	69
15.	WHITBY ABBEY RUINS - - - - -	85
16.	THE ABBESS HILDA RECEIVING KING OSWY'S DAUGHTER - - -	90
17.	"CÆDMON, SING ME SOMETHING" - - - - -	94
18.	ARCHBISHOP THEODORE PLACING CHAD ON HORSEBACK - - -	106
19.	OWIN RECEIVED AT LASTINGHAM - - - - -	109
20.	WILFRID'S CHAIR AT HEXHAM - - - - -	122
21.	ELY CATHEDRAL - - - - -	127
22.	WILFRID SHOWS HIS CONVERTS HOW TO FISH - - -	133
23.	MONKSWEARMOUTH CHURCH - - - - -	146
24.	DURHAM CATHEDRAL - - - - -	155
25.	S. CUTHBERT'S TOMB, DURHAM - - - - -	157
26.	CARRYING S. CUTHBERT'S REMAINS - - - - -	158
27.	S. ADHELM'S CHURCH, BRADFORD-ON-AVON - - -	161
28.	BEDE'S CHAIR (REPUTED) - - - - -	183
29.	BEDE TRANSLATING S. JOHN'S GOSPEL - - -	187

LIST OF MAPS

			PAGE
CANTERBURY MISSION, A.D. 597-616 (CHAPTER I.)	-	-	5
CANTERBURY MISSION, A.D. 616-633 (CHAPTER VI.)	-	-	30
LINDISFARNE MISSION, ETC. (CHAPTER XI.)	-	-	53
DIOCESES CIRCA A.D. 705 (CHAPTER XXIV.)	-	-	164

THE CONVERSION OF THE ENGLISH

INTRODUCTION

THE England of to-day was yet to be when Augustine the missionary landed in Kent. At that time it was occupied by two races, the one conquering, the other slowly being conquered.

Our heathen forefathers were the conquering race. From across the sea they had come in their terrible war-ships, now at one time, now at another; and wherever a footing had been gained a kingdom was formed, to become the basis of fresh havoc and slaughter inland. "Cruel as well as fierce, they made it a point of religion to torture their captives rather than put them to ransom, and to sacrifice a tenth part of them to their gods."*

Retreating inch by inch before these savage and inhuman foes were the conquered Britons. They were not heathen, but Christian, and their Church had been founded at a very early date. Amongst the sanctuaries deserted in their flight was one whose fame still survives. S. Alban† had died a martyr's death in the last of the persecutions, before the Roman empire became Christian; and the soil watered by his blood was to his countrymen holy ground. But now this sacred spot was in the hands of the heathen, and many another desolate city and ruined church

* Sidonius Apollinaris, Ep. VIII. 6.

† See Supplement. The date given for the martyrdom is a matter of controversy.

marked their pitiless advance, as this Christian people "fled from the Angles like fire."*

At length the tide of conquest was stayed, and the British Church took refuge in Wales, and the hills of the West, where it is still represented by the four Welsh dioceses which were for many centuries, until recently, incorporated into the Church of England. But it was not due to this native Church that the English became Christians. So bitter was the hatred inspired by defeat, that no effort was made by the Welsh, as we now call them, to convert the foe. As it were, they said, "You have driven us from our homes, but we deny you our faith." The fierce heathen warriors were well content; they gloried in their heathen gods and despised the meek white Christ who had failed to defend His own. Yet it was the religion of the conquered which was to become the religion of the victors, and this was due, in the first place, to Pope Gregory.

SUPPLEMENT: S. ALBAN

(Bede, i. 7, 18)

The story of S. Alban,[†] but briefly, is as follows: Though a heathen himself, when the persecution of the Christians broke out he gave refuge to a certain cleric; and, as he watched him and marked his earnest prayers by day and night, he became his pupil, then his convert, and was in due time doubtless baptized.

Meanwhile it came to the ears of the wicked prince that a confessor of Christ lay hid at Alban's cottage; and a search was made. The soldiers failed to secure the cleric, but they found Alban awaiting them, clad in his teacher's cassock. He was at once led to the judge, who was at that moment offering sacrifices. When he saw the prisoner, he

* Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 473, Giles, tr.

† The text omits "the three marvellous incidents" as "probably an aftergrowth." There seems no reason to doubt the "historic reality of the British proto-martyr." Bright, 8, 9.

was filled with rage that he should have dared to take the place of his guest, and commanded him to be dragged to the images, where he was standing.

"Because you have chosen," he cried, "to conceal a sacrilegious rebel and despiser of the gods, rather than deliver him up to my soldiers, his punishment shall be yours if you abandon the worship of our religion." Alban openly, but firmly, refused to obey.

"Of what family are you?"

"What does that matter? I am a Christian, and bound by Christian duties."

"What is your name? Tell it me immediately."

"I am called Alban by my parents, and worship and adore the true and living God, who created all things."

The trial took its usual course, and even the terrible agony of a Roman scourging failed to shake Alban's constancy. At last it was decided that he should be beheaded at a place fixed beyond the river. So great was the excitement, that even the judge was left without attendants, and the bridge blocked by the crowds who came to see the end. Nor was this all. The headsman flung himself at his prisoner's feet desiring to suffer with him, and they won the martyr's crown together.

Such is the story of the British proto-martyr, which has survived all changes. When the Church which had produced so great a saint gave birth to a heretic, two bishops were sent from Gaul, now France, to recall her members to the truth; and, after they had fulfilled their task, they paid a visit to the tomb, and took back with them, to their own land, a parcel of dust from the hallowed spot, still red, it was believed, with the martyr's blood. The shrine was left desolate by the heathen English, but when they were converted it was rebuilt, and the modern city and see of S. Albans still recall the saint's heroic end.

PART I.—CANTERBURY MISSION

I.—POPE GREGORY AND THE HEATHEN IN ENGLAND

(Bede, i. 23, 25; ii. 1)

“Gregory our Father,”* such is the affectionate title with which the Saxon Christians loved to speak of the Pope who “sent us baptism.”†

A passing incident in an eventful life, it is said, excited his lifelong interest in our race. It happened, one day, that he visited the market at Rome, and as he gazed upon the scene he noticed some boys with white skins and sunny golden hair.

Pausing for some moments in his walk, he stood looking at them with pitying eyes. Then, turning to the slave-owner, he asked him, “From what land do these come?”

“From the land of Britain,” he replied, and, seeing that Gregory was attracted by their unusual appearance, he added: “Its inhabitants resemble these bright-faced lads before you.”

“Are these islanders Christians or heathen?”

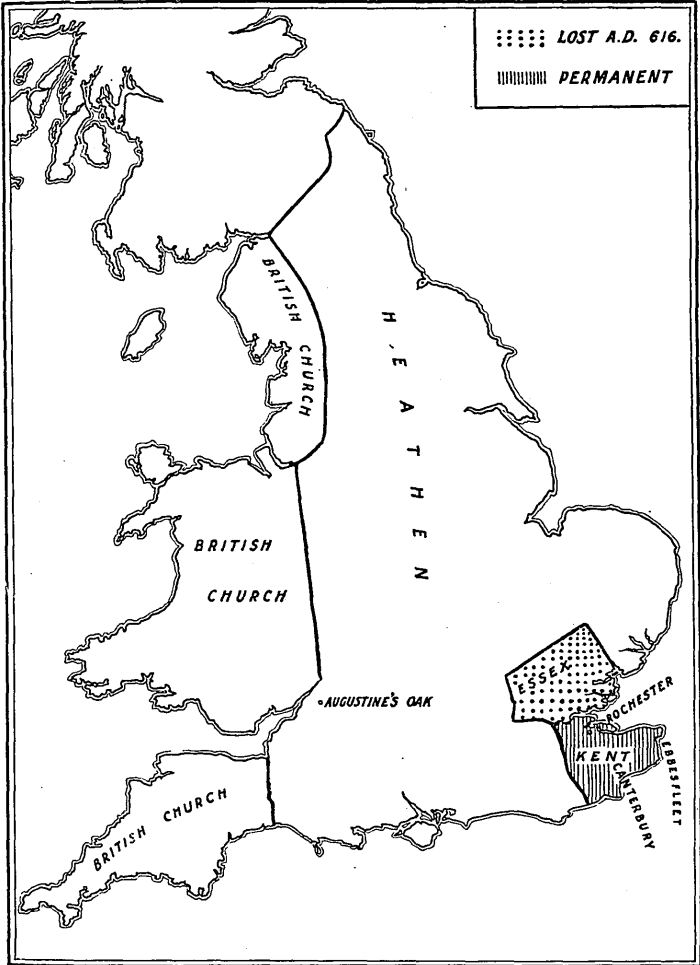
“They are heathen.” Gregory sighed from the bottom of his heart; it was what he expected, yet what he feared to know.

“Alas,” he cried, “alas! how sad it is that faces so bright should belong to the Prince of Darkness; and that an appearance so graceful should lack the grace within.”

“What is the name of their race?” was his next question.

* Council of Clovesho, A.D. 747; Haddan and Stubbs, iii. 368.

† Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 565, Giles, tr.



CANTERBURY MISSION, A.D. 597-616.

"They are called Angles," or, as we should say, "English"; a matter-of-fact reply, but full of unlooked-for meaning to Gregory.

"Angles are they called, it is well; for they have angels' faces, and should be co-heirs with the angels in heaven."

The slave-owner must have wondered much at the strange turn given to his bald and simple statements, but Gregory went on. "From what country do they come?"

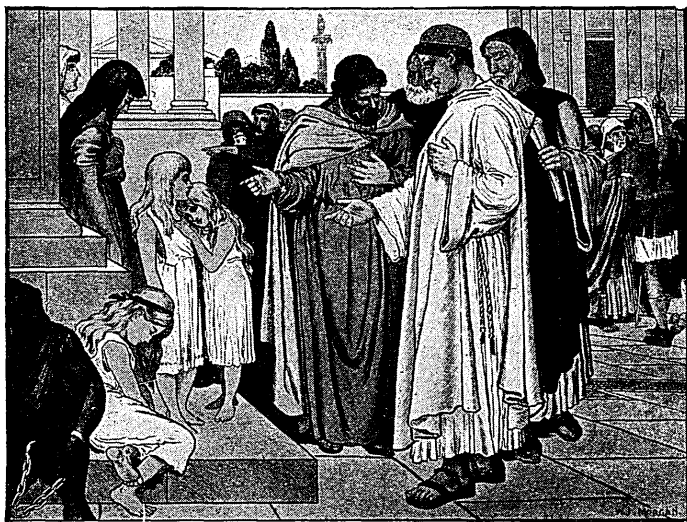


FIG. 1.—POPE GREGORY AND THE ENGLISH SLAVES.

"From Deira."* "De ira," mused Gregory in Latin; that is in English, "From the wrath to come they should be delivered."

The name of their king, Ella, suggested yet another turn on words. "Alleluia, the praises of God should be sung in those parts."

* Roughly speaking, the tract of land between the "Tees and the Humber," now Yorkshire. Bright, 40.

With this the conversation ended, but Gregory never forgot his visit to the slave-market at Rome; for the boys, Angles by race and with angels' faces, haunted his memory. Unable to begin the good work himself, after he became Pope he directed his steward to buy up "boys of seventeen or eighteen, of English birth, that they might receive a Christian education";* in the hope, we may well suppose, that they would in time become teachers to their countrymen. But in the end Gregory decided upon another plan.

Amongst the various kingdoms produced in England by the Saxon conquest was that of Kent. Now Ethelbert, its king, had married a Christian wife; and Queen Bertha† had been allowed not only to keep her faith, but even to have a chaplain at the heathen court.

It was probably on hearing of this that Gregory determined to send a mission at once. The opportunity was a good one, and delay was dangerous. So Augustine, the prior of his monastery of S. Andrew at Rome, was appointed to undertake the work, with several other monks to assist him.

The journey from Italy to England was a long one, and the zeal of the little band had plenty of time to cool. Dismal tales would be told its members of the heathen they proposed to convert to the faith of a conquered people. If Augustine described their fair faces, which had so deeply touched Pope Gregory, his hearers would remind him that fair faces could conceal foul hearts; and they would dwell on the cruelty of the Saxons, fierce by nature and uncivilized, whose very language they did not understand.

Moved by such tales, a vague fear seized the timid monks; till at last, thoroughly terrified, Augustine was persuaded by his companions to return to Rome. There, with all

* Greg., Ep. VI, 7, to Candidus; H. and S., iii. 5.

† She was the daughter of the Christian King of Paris. Of her chaplain, Bishop Liudhard, nothing is known. Bede, i. 25.

heart for the work completely gone, he besought Pope Gregory to allow them to give up so dangerous a journey.

It was a painful meeting, but Gregory kept his disappointment to himself; and Augustine finally rejoined the monks with a letter, in which the fervent Pope pointed out: It were better not to begin a good work, than to begin and then leave off. Let his beloved sons hasten with all zeal to complete what, with God's help, they had now undertaken. Let no dangers of the journey nor fearsome tales of the evil-minded deter them, for the greater the labour the greater the glory of the eternal reward.

But Gregory was not content with this; the hopes of a lifetime gave yet more force to his tender rebuke. God would grant that he should see the fruit of their labours in the heavenly country; for though he was unable to share their toils, he had been willing to do so, and the joy of their reward would be his as well as theirs.

Before such faith as this all their fears vanished. With Augustine no longer their prior, but their abbot, whom they were to obey in all things, the journey was begun again, and in due time the missionaries arrived at the shores of Kent.

II.—THE ARRIVAL OF THE MISSION IN KENT

(Bede, i. 25, 26)

The chief bishop of the Church of England is the Archbishop of Canterbury; and therefore the position of his see in a remote part of the country, and not at London, would be most perplexing, but for the fact that it was fixed by the fate of Augustine's mission.

He landed on the shores of Kent, the exact spot* is not known; but it was certainly in the Isle of Thanet, then separated from the mainland by a river.

Now, Canterbury was the capital of Ethelbert, King of Kent, and this stronghold had, as it were, a friend within its walls; for at this place Queen Bertha had a little church, called S. Martin's, assigned to her use. Nor was this all, for if the actual dominions of her heathen husband were but small, his authority reached as far as the Humber, so that much might be hoped from his conversion.

There was, therefore, a real hope of success for the mission, but the first step was to gain a favourable hearing. For this purpose Augustine sent a messenger to the capital, announcing the peaceful nature of his journey.

He was told, by way of reply, to remain where he was, but with all his necessities supplied at the royal cost. It was a blunt but kindly answer, and some days later the king appeared in person to grant him an interview.

By Ethelbert's express command, the meeting took place in the open air; for, as a heathen, he believed that in a house magic could be used to gain his consent against

* Ebbesfleet is the place usually selected.

his will. Only in the open air did he feel safe from this danger. Augustine, no doubt, was well content; all he



FIG. 2.—S. AUGUSTINE LANDING IN BRITAIN.

wanted was to see the king face to face, so he set forth with a joyful heart.

Before his monks, as they walked in procession, a silver cross was borne, and also a picture of our Lord and Saviour painted upon a board. Augustine followed last, his "majestic person towering above all his companions."* And, as they proceeded, they sang in solemn litanies, beseeching eternal salvation for themselves and their hearers. Thus, singing and praying, they reached the presence of the king; and, with a courteous request that they should be seated, the momentous interview began.

Augustine did not understand English nor Ethelbert, we may be sure, Latin, but this difficulty was overcome by means of an interpreter. Thus, Augustine preached the Word of Life, with his silver cross beside him and the picture of the Saviour to illustrate his meaning. And as the king and his courtiers listened, it became clear that they had nothing to fear from these monks who sang hymns, with a silver cross as their banner, and a picture as their weapons of war. But though King Ethelbert was convinced that they relied not on magic but on faith for the success of their message, he naturally felt that he must do nothing rashly; and this was his decision:

"Your words and promises are fair indeed; but because they are new and uncertain, I cannot assent to them, and forsake that which I have so long followed, with the rest of the English race. But since you have come from a long distance, and it seems clear to me that those things which you believe to be true and good you desire to impart to us, we will not hinder you, but rather we grant you our hospitality, and all things necessary for your support; nor do we forbid you to preach, and win all you can to your religion."

It was a weighty decision, full of good sense, and right worthy of the heathen ruler who made it. Augustine

* Gocelin supplies this detail, Vit. Aug. 49, Bright, tr. 48.

and his monks must have lifted up their hearts in thankfulness to God, who had so richly blessed them at the very outset of their venture for the faith.

Nor had they to wait longer, in anxious suspense, upon the shores of the country they came to convert; for Ethelbert proved as good as his word, and, as a definite proof of his hearty goodwill, he assigned to the mission a house in the capital of his kingdom.

So they advanced to Canterbury, and as they approached the city, a little band it is said of nearly forty monks, they once more formed a procession. With the silver cross and the picture of our Lord borne aloft, they moved to their future home, singing in solemn litanies: "We beseech thee, O Lord, in Thy great mercy; that Thy wrath and anger be turned away from this city, and from Thy holy house, for we have sinned. Alleluia."

The song, as well as the strange and novel sight, must have produced a deep impression upon the heathen folk; as they poured forth to see these strangers who had come to dwell in their midst.

Once settled at Canterbury, it was natural that S. Martin's Church, already used by Ethelbert's Christian queen, should become the centre of their labours. There they first began "to sing psalms, to pray, to say Mass, to preach, and to baptize" all who were attracted to the new faith by the innocence of their lives, and the sweetness of their heavenly doctrine.

That little church still stands, the most sacred spot in this country. Dedicated to God's glory by the ancient Britons, it had, by a strange chance, survived the inrush of the heathen English; and there Augustine began again to preach the faith, which seemed to have been crushed beyond hope of revival.

Tradition helps us to realize the scenes which took

place in its venerable walls. "A youth mingles in the throng in order to gratify a scornful curiosity. Augustine gazes fixedly at him, and says to his attendant, 'Bring that young man to me.' The youth, overawed, clasps the Saint's feet; all his pride and levity give place to faith. Augustine embraces, instructs, baptizes, solemnly blesses him."*



FIG. 3.—S. MARTIN'S CHURCH, CANTERBURY.

Such scenes were no doubt common enough, and in due time Ethelbert was himself baptized on Whitsun Eve, A.D. 597.† This momentous step had an immense effect, and on the following Christmas Day more than ten thousand Kentish men‡ were received into the Church, probably influenced by their king's example. It was not, however, his wish that it should be so. The wise prudence with which he had welcomed the mission did not desert him with

* Gocelin, Vit. Aug. 49, Bright, tr. note 53.

† Bright, 52, and note on Elmham, Hist. Mon. Aug. 137.

‡ Greg., Ep. VII. 30; H. and S., iii. 12.

his change of faith; and he took the greatest care to compel none of his subjects to become Christians. But while none were forced into the fold of Christ, the king, naturally enough, showed more affection to the believers, as fellow-heirs with him of the heavenly kingdom.

III.—AUGUSTINE ARCHBISHOP OF THE ENGLISH

(Bede, i. 27, 29, 30, 33)

It was about this time that Augustine went to Arles to be consecrated as archbishop of the English. Later he sent two of his companions, Peter and Laurence, to Rome, with a full account of all that had taken place. With much joy Pope Gregory received them, for their report was as different as black from white from that which Augustine had brought back when he had gone but half-way to England. Gregory's interest in the mission was as strong as ever, and fresh recruits were sent with the messengers on their return, three of whom became eminent—Mellitus, Justus, and Paulinus. Gifts, too, were bestowed with a lavish hand, amongst them many books, sacred vessels, and vestments; together with a special gift for Augustine personally, called a pall, to which the condition was attached that it was to be used only at Mass.*

In addition to his replies to nine questions which Augustine laid before him, Gregory drew up a scheme for the organization of the infant Church; but it never got beyond the paper on which it was written.† On another knotty

* Two of these books may possibly be still in existence, but this is dubious. Plummer, ii. 56; Bright, 70, 71 and note; Bede, i. 29.

The pall was originally a cloak "of plain or of rich materials," which "became part of the imperial attire, and was granted by emperors, as a mark of honour, to patriarchs." Then it was bestowed by the Pope, "originally in the emperor's name," but in the course of centuries it became a badge of Papal authority, and restricted to archbishops. Gregory personally bestowed the gift on bishops, as well as metropolitans, and for various reasons. In his letter to Augustine, he "seems certainly to treat the reception of the pallium as necessary to enable Augustine to consecrate bishops" (Bede, i. 29). On the whole subject, see Bright, 63, 64; Plummer, ii. 49-52; Browne, "Augustine and his Companions," 91 and 194-201.

† By this scheme London and York were to be the sees of two archbishops, each with twelve suffragans. Bede, i. 29.

point, however, his decision had a more practical result. What was to be done with the idol temples left desolate by the conversion of the heathen English? At first Gregory decided that they must be pulled down, but afterwards, with large-minded sympathy for the new converts, he changed his mind.

Their custom, as heathens, had been to meet for sacrifices to their gods, and afterwards to keep high festival with the remains of the slaughtered oxen. This innocent enjoyment Gregory preserved. The idols were destroyed, but the temples cleansed, and converted to the worship of the true God. The day of dedication was made a yearly festival, for which the people built themselves huts of boughs that they might come together in crowds; and in religious feasts, with thanksgivings to the Giver of all good things, the customs of the past were preserved in a new and better spirit.

Thus by steps, not by leaps or bounds, to use Gregory's illustration, the people were weaned from their idols to serve the living God, and the feast week of many a village church may well remind us of those distant days, when our forefathers were converted to the true faith.

Ethelbert, on hearing of Gregory's decision, handed over to Augustine a heathen temple at Canterbury to be consecrated. This was done, and the church dedicated in the name of S. Pancras, a Roman boy of noble family, who had died a martyr's death at the early age of fourteen. The choice of this boy saint, for the name of the once heathen temple, reminds us of Gregory's visit to the slave-market, and his wish that Alleluia should be sung by the Angles—that is, the English race.*

* It is a more probable reason for Augustine's choice that Gregory's monastery of S. Andrew, of which he had been prior, was built on the patrimony of S. Pancras. See Elmham, *Hist. Mon. Aug.* 80, for this rededication. Bright, 57 and note.

Heathen temples no doubt existed in plenty to be converted to a new use; but there were also Christian churches to be found, left in desolation by the very heathen who were now pressing into the fold of Christ. It must have been a peculiar pleasure to Augustine to receive such a British church, and to rededicate it as Christ Church. This link with the past is now known as Canterbury Cathedral, and, though the present building replaces the one built by Augus-

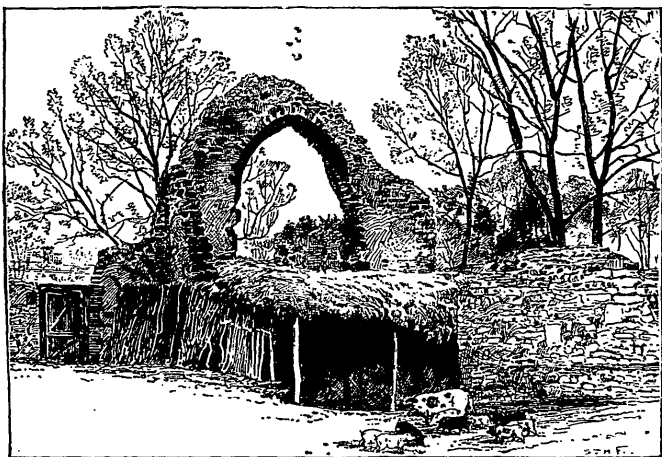


FIG. 4.—S. PANCRAS RUINS, CANTERBURY.

tine, it should remind us not only of him, but also of King Ethelbert. The site was given by him, and it is just possible that he also resigned his palace, and retired from his capital to make room for the archbishop.* Ethelbert was, in fact, a true nursing father of the infant Church, the first of the many Christian kings who strongly encouraged the spread of the new religion in their dominions. Their

* Stanley, "Historical Memorials of Canterbury," 39; but see Plummer, ii. 44.

royal influence, seen at its brightest and best in King Ethelbert, largely ensured the speedy success of the various missions to the English.

The existence of these ruined churches would convince Augustine that he was but restoring what had been swept away in the storms of the past; and the knowledge that the descendants of the conquered race still existed in the West, with their Christian faith intact, naturally suggested to him that their bishops ought to help him in converting their victorious foes.

The seventh of the nine questions laid before Pope Gregory bore upon this point, and the answer was perfectly clear: "But as for all the bishops of Britain we commit them to your care, that the ignorant may be taught, the weak strengthened by persuasion, and the perverse corrected by authority."*

It was an unfortunate reply, for the British bishops did not acknowledge the authority of the Pope, and still less that of Augustine, to regulate their affairs.

* Bede, i. 27. On the claim thus made by Pope Gregory, to interfere in the affairs of the British Church, see Bright, 64-66, Plummer, ii. 52; Lingard, "Antiq. A. S. Ch.," i., 379-382. Far more in accordance with the large-minded wisdom of Pope Gregory was his answer to Augustine's second question, on the variations in ritual he had found in different Churches: "Things ought not to be beloved for the sake of places, but places for the sake of good things"; and, in obedience to this famous maxim, Augustine was authorized to adopt whatever customs seemed to him more pleasing to Almighty God, either in the Roman or any other Church.

IV.—AUGUSTINE AND THE BRITISH BISHOPS

(Bede, ii. 2, 4, 20)

A meeting with the British bishops was easily arranged, with Ethelbert's all-powerful assistance;* but the conference itself was to prove a more delicate matter.

The bishops were uneasy, as well they might be, and Augustine's methods did little to soothe them. He wanted their help, but it was only on his own terms† that he would accept it; and it was but natural that this somewhat peculiar method of making a request should give offence. In fact, a quarrel soon took place, but its cause requires some explanation.

Augustine, with the Pope, celebrated Easter at one time, but the bishops frequently did so at another, for they followed a different reckoning for the date of the great festival. The result would have been confusion if they were to work together, and the difficulty was destined to be settled at length by its practical inconvenience.‡ But Augustine could not wait. It must be done now and at once, he urged. "Ours is the right date, for we agree with the Catholic Church." Now, it was just this tone of authority which was making the bishops uneasy, and at once they were up in arms. "Why should they give up their customs," they asked, "at the bidding of Augustine and his companions?"

* The spot selected was long known as Augustine's Oak. Modern research would place it somewhere in Gloucestershire. See Bright, 77, 78; Plummer, ii. 74.

† These terms were finally reduced to three at the second conference: (1) That Easter should be celebrated at its proper time. (2) That baptism should be administered according to the use of the Holy Roman and Apostolic Church. (3) To unite in preaching the Gospel to the English.

‡ At the C. of Whitby, ch. xvii.

The introduction, it is said, of a blind man by Augustine whom he healed by his prayers after the bishops had failed



FIG. 5.—S. AUGUSTINE RECEIVING THE BRITISH BISHOPS.

to cure him, brought this unseemly wrangle to a close in favour of Augustine. But it is more probable that the real matter at issue, namely, the conversion of the English,

produced a fresh effort for agreement. At any rate, the conference was adjourned.

Seven British bishops, it is said, with other learned men were deputed to attend the second meeting; but before they did so they decided, in their anxiety, to consult a certain holy man, whose sanctity and life of solitude gave him great weight.

"Shall we give up our customs at the bidding of Augustine?" they asked, for it was his claim to alter them, and thus assert himself as their archbishop, which chiefly occupied their minds.

"If he be a man of God, follow him," the holy man replied.

"But how shall we prove this?" they asked in perplexity.

"The Lord said," was the answer, "'Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.' If, therefore, Augustine is meek and lowly in heart, it is certain he bears the yoke of Christ himself and that he offers it to you; but if he is stern and proud, then he is not of God, nor need we listen to him."

"But how shall we know this?" asked the bishops.

"Arrange," said the holy man, "that Augustine shall arrive first, and if he rises to receive you, then know that he is indeed the servant of Christ, and readily listen to what he has to say; but if he despises you, by not rising up to receive you when you are more in number, then let him be despised by you."

This test, if simple and definite, certainly made a great deal depend upon what might easily be a mere accident; but for good or evil the bishops, so runs the story, determined to adopt it. Augustine was therefore allowed to arrive first, all unconscious of the reason. Next appeared the seven bishops, eagerly watching him; and when they

saw that he remained seated, filled with anger they promptly charged him with pride, for his want of courtesy.

It was a bad impression at the outset, but without noticing the murmurs, Augustine calmly proceeded to lay down conditions,* which the bishops were asked to accept without further discussion.

Conditions, when they had all but made up their minds to have nothing to do with him, this was but to add fuel to the flames! "If he did not rise up to receive us," they said among themselves, "how much more will he despise us if we submit to him." So they contradicted all he said, and gave as their reply to his terms: "We will do none of these things, and we will not have you as our archbishop."*

They were furious and, unfortunately, Augustine also lost his temper; and in hot anger he cried: "If you will not have peace with brethren, you must look for war from foes; and if you will not preach the way of life to the English nation, the vengeance of death will be yours at their hands."

With this parting threat the conference broke up in confusion, and Augustine's words were considered a prophecy, owing to a tragic event which took place long after his death.

Ethelfrid, a king of the Angles renowned in war, had laid siege to the city we now call Chester. To his surprise, he saw drawn up against him not only soldiers, but monks and priests, who had come from Bangor to pray for the success of the British arms. The sight filled Ethelfrid with fury. "If against us they cry to their God," he said, "they fight against us not with arms but with curses. Attack them first." It was done, and but fifty escaped to tell the tale.

* See p. 19 note. "These words show that Augustine's claim . . . was emphatically rejected, and with it the authority of the Roman see on which that claim rested." Plummer, ii. 76.

Now, the learned men who had accompanied the seven British bishops came from the monastery of Bangor, and, therefore, the utter destruction of this famous seat of learning was considered the result of Augustine's threat. The standing quarrel produced by the conference was, however, melancholy enough, without this disaster being attributed to it.

Later on we shall see how a British king trampled, with relentless fury, on the remnants of a mission sent from Canterbury to the north, callously indifferent to the Christian faith of his foes. It was with a bitterness caused by long years of strife that Bede, who was born before the last Saxon kingdom was converted from heathenism, wrote in his "Ecclesiastical History": "To this day it is the custom of the Britons to count the faith and religion of the English as nought, nor to communicate with them in anything, any more than with pagans."

Archbishop Laurence, Augustine's successor, tried once more to win the British Church to "Catholic unity," but "how far he succeeded in this the present times declare," is Bede's scornful comment. Nor were his efforts with its sister communion in Ireland more successful. One of its bishops, named Dagan, certainly came to see him, but at last refused to meet him at meals, or even to stop at the same inn where Laurence was staying.

This miserable meeting did not, however, produce after-consequences. If the ancient Church of the land never gave the slightest aid to English Christianity, it was from Iona, founded from Ireland, that the Christian religion in Northumbria was built up upon the ruins of the ill-fated mission sent from Canterbury. But this is to anticipate. It is sufficient to add here that only when the British Church at last adopted the Catholic Easter was the way prepared for its union with the present Church of England.

V.—DEATH OF AUGUSTINE AND ETHELBERT

(Bede, ii. 3-6)

Defeated in his effort to gain assistance from the bishops in the West, Augustine began a fresh effort nearer home. Beyond the Thames was the kingdom of the East Saxons. Sabert, its king, was easily converted to the faith of his uncle Ethelbert, Mellitus consecrated as Bishop of London, its capital, and S. Paul's Cathedral founded by Ethelbert. How long this new ground, so very quickly won, was kept will be shortly seen.

Within Kent Augustine also strove to make the mission more secure, by planting another see at Rochester, with Justus as its bishop. Both the new sees at London and Rochester, as well as that at Canterbury, were liberally endowed by Ethelbert, who in his own kingdom, "with the counsel of the Wise Men," passed laws, amongst other things, for the protection of the infant Church. So began the union between Church and State which still exists. Nor was this all; these laws were drawn up "after the Roman model," and, being "written out in the English tongue," represent an advance in Kent upon the native custom, due to the Roman civilization which followed in the wake of Christianity.*

There was, however, a dark background to this pleasant picture of civilization and the true religion at work together, in a once heathen land. The heirs of Ethelbert and Sabert were still heathen, biding their time; and in the dread of evil days, when he was dead and gone, Augustine took the unusual step of consecrating his successor. His

* See Plummer, ii. 87.

choice fell upon Laurence, who had been with him in storm and sunshine from the first; and it seems to tell of the sad thoughts which filled his mind in his last hours. He died in 604 or 605,* probably the latter. The walls of the monastery of S. Peter and S. Paul, now S. Augustine, which he had founded outside Canterbury as a burial-place for himself and his successors, were then rising, a type of the

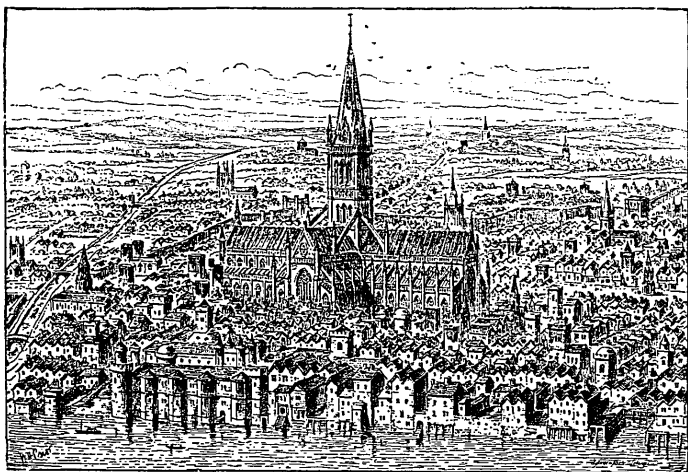


FIG. 6.—S. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL.

incomplete nature of his work. He had, however, been more successful than he could have foreseen, when he passed to his rest; for his work, which but covered the space of about eight years in all, *was to endure*. If the mission which he had founded in Kent largely failed to inherit the land, others were more fortunate. Finally, it was due to his successor that these various missions were welded

* On the date of Augustine's death and the consecration of Laurence see Bright, 95-98.

together into one Church. How all this came to pass has still to be told. Meanwhile, the ninety-sixth Archbishop of Canterbury should rightly remind us that the founder of the chair of S. Augustine called into existence *the Church of England of to-day*.

Eleven years were to pass before Ethelbert followed Augustine to the grave, and with his death came the storm so long expected.

Eadbald, the late king's son and successor, began his reign by marrying his father's widow, and his own step-mother. This was permitted by heathen custom, and the change at court thus indicated was quickly noted. Those who had become Christians to please King Ethelbert were delighted to renounce the new religion to please his son.

All was now in confusion in Kent, and the news from beyond the Thames was no less disquieting. King Sabert had also died leaving three sons who were still heathen at heart, and only waiting his death to throw off the yoke of a pretended faith in Christ.

They were not content with a free permission to their subjects to worship idols, for one day while Mellitus was celebrating the Holy Communion, the solemn service was rudely interrupted. The princes entered, just as he had begun to give the Eucharist to the faithful, and hurrying up to the altar they rudely asked: "Why do you not give us of this white bread which you used to give to our father Saba, and still give to the people in the church?"

The rough words and the use of the familiar name of the late king were unpardonable enough, but Mellitus mildly answered, "If you are willing to be washed in that font of salvation, in which your father was washed, you can also partake of this holy bread, as he used to do, but if you despise the laver of life, you cannot receive the bread of life."

His calm dignity but made them the more insolent. "We will not go into that font," they cried, "for we know not that we have need of it, yet will we eat of that bread."

But Mellitus was firm; and at last they burst forth: "If you will not give way to us in so small a matter as this, you shall not stay in our land"—and they drove him and his out of the kingdom.

Mellitus fled to Canterbury, but the archbishop and Justus had but cold comfort to give, for Kent, like London and Essex, was in open revolt. "Better is it," they agreed together, "to serve God in freedom in our own country, than to dwell without hope among barbarians, rebels to the faith." So the two bishops crossed the sea, being more alive to their safety than their plain and simple duty; but Laurence remained behind. His mind, too, was set on flight, as it had been once before when Augustine had returned to Rome; for the remembrance of Gregory's tender rebuke had no effect upon him, and for the second time in his life he prepared to play the coward's part. With a bitter heart he directed his bed to be made in the church of S. Peter and S. Paul's, intending to depart on the morrow. Near at hand rested the mortal remains of Augustine and his faithful friend, King Ethelbert, their work about to be undone: no wonder the unhappy man prayed with tears to God for the state of the Church, before he retired to rest.

At last he slept, and in his slumbers a strange thing befell him. There appeared to him the Apostle S. Peter, and beat him with many stripes, and with the stripes administered this stern rebuke, in which we seem to hear "the rhythmic swish of the descending lash."*

"Why desert the flock I have entrusted to your charge? Or why flee, and leave Christ's sheep in the midst of wolves, without a shepherd?"

* Browne, "Augustine and his Companions," 165.

“Dost thou forget my example? For Christ’s little ones I endured stripes, imprisonments, and lastly death itself. But now with Him I wear the crown.”

The story runs, that Laurence awoke sore not only in mind but in body. The next morning he went to the king and drawing aside his robe, displayed his stripes. Eadbald was much amazed and asked: “Who has dared to inflict such blows on a man of your rank?”

Laurence told him, and when the king learnt that the punishment had been the work of the Apostle of Christ, he was filled with awe, gave up his idols, renounced his father’s widow, and was baptized.

Such is the story, but whatever was the exact cause of the archbishop’s tardy repentance and the king’s conversion, it stood the test of time. Laurence never left the country at all, and, after a year’s absence, Mellitus and Justus returned. The latter was restored to his see of Rochester, but more than this Eadbald could not do, for, though the princes who had set Mellitus at defiance were soon afterwards slain, the people of London stoutly refused to receive back their bishop, preferring their idolatrous high priests.

Kent, therefore, was recovered, to be for the future a Christian land; but Augustine’s efforts to extend his mission beyond its borders were a failure; and, for a long time to come, London and Essex were lost to Christianity.

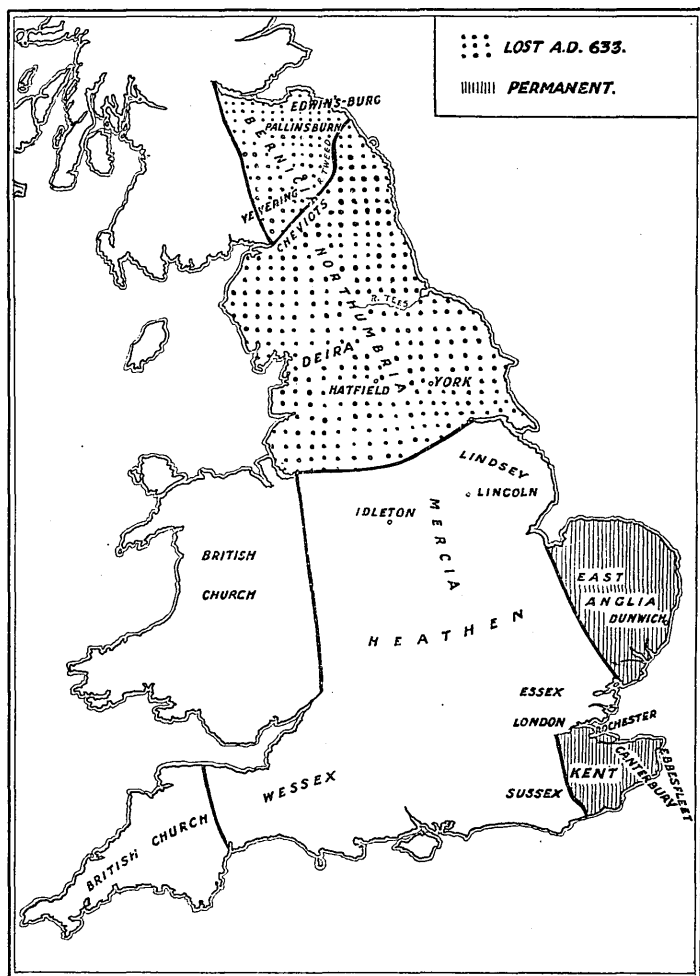
VI.—KING EDWIN OF NORTHUMBRIA

(Bede, ii. 6-9, 12, 14, 15)

A period of inaction not unnaturally followed the terrific crisis, which had so nearly brought the mission to an untimely end. Laurence was succeeded by Mellitus at Canterbury, who in his turn made room for Justus; but no further effort was made to convert the heathen.

Justus, on succeeding to the see of Canterbury, wrote to the Pope for permission to ordain a bishop at Rochester in his place. His request was granted, not only for the see of Rochester, but also elsewhere as occasion should arise. With the letter was also sent a pall, like that which Justus had himself brought to Augustine from the famous Gregory, when he had joined the mission with Paulinus and Mellitus. If Justus felt "sadly conscious that he was now single-handed," the Pope bade him be of good cheer, dwelling upon Eadbald's undoubted conversion as an encouraging reason for patience in disappointment; for this king had now become a changed man, and, with his people, "was studious in yielding himself to the divine precepts." Altogether, the letter and the pall formed a kindly attention, recalling hopes which had become wellnigh forgotten; and, almost as if in consequence of it, a fresh opportunity for action occurred.

Its cause was prosaic enough. Edwin, the new King of Northumbria, had sent messengers to Eadbald asking for his sister, Ethelburga, in marriage. At first the offer was declined. The king did not hesitate to part with a sister, so fondly loved that she was known as Tata, "the darling," but his zeal for Christ stood in the way.



CANTERBURY MISSION, A.D. 616-633.

"I cannot give my sister to a heathen; my religion forbids it."*

The consternation of Justus can be imagined. It was a most unexpected blow that Eadbald's faith, on which the Pope had dwelt so hopefully in his letter, should prove so serious an obstacle.

Edwin, however, was a persistent lover. Fresh messengers arrived, armed with fresh promises. "I will allow the princess, and all her attendants, every facility for following their religion, and if, after the examination of my wise men, this new faith prove more worthy of God, I will adopt it."

Justus, we may be sure, did not fail to urge that this was all that could reasonably be expected; and at last Eadbald gave a reluctant consent. Edwin obtained his bride, and Queen Ethelburga was accompanied to her new home by Paulinus, who was consecrated bishop before he started in 625.

Before joining them there, let us turn to the previous history of the bridegroom. Edwin was the son of that very King Ella, whose name had suggested to Gregory that Alleluia ought to be sung by the English race. His father had died when he was but three years old, his inheritance of Deira had been seized by his uncle, Ethelfrid, and he grew up in exile. Thus his youth was one of hardship and adversity, spent in wandering from court to court, wherever he could find a refuge from his relentless foe.

The crisis of his fate was reached when he found a new protector in Redwald, King of East Anglia, whose previous history might well have foreshadowed the result. During a visit to Kent, probably in Ethelbert's time, he had become a Christian; but, returning home, he was persuaded by his wife and perverse teachers to adopt a compromise, and in

* Bright, tr. 115.

the same temple he placed an altar for Christ's sacrifice, and another smaller one for the worship of idols.

Edwin's safety now depended upon this easy-going king. No wonder he was driven to despair, when he learnt that the hatred of Ethelfrid was as keen as ever, and that Redwald had received message after message, offering large sums of money for his murder in cold blood. The bribe was firmly resisted, but with the threat of war Redwald yielded to the pressure put upon him and consented, either to put his guest to death, or to deliver him into the hands of his mortal enemy.

It was the darkest moment of Edwin's life. A trusty friend of his, as he was going to bed, called him out of doors and told him the fatal news, adding: "If, therefore, you wish it, I will this very hour conduct you out of this kingdom, and bring you to a place where neither Redwald nor Ethelfrid shall be able to find you."

Edwin's answer was one of moody hopelessness. "Many thanks for your kindness," he replied, "but I cannot be the first to break friendship with a king who, as yet, has done me no wrong, and if I must die, let it be by his hand rather than by that of anyone less noble; for where should I now flee, after wandering as a vagabond through all the countries of Britain?"

After his friend had left him, Edwin remained alone, seated on a stone before the palace, overwhelmed by his mournful thoughts. A long time was passed in this silent distress, when suddenly, at dead of night, he was startled and alarmed by the approach of a man, whose face and dress were alike strange to him.

The stranger saluted him, and asked him, "Why, at this hour, when everyone else is sound asleep, do you sit here upon a stone, alone and sorrowful?"

Edwin, recovering himself, roughly replied: "What

matters it to you, whether I pass the night indoors or out ?”

“Do not think,” returned the stranger, “that I am ignorant of the grief which is causing you this sleepless night; I know who you are and what you are afraid of. But tell me, what reward would you give to anyone who should persuade Redwald to do you no wrong ?”

“I would give all I could,” replied Edwin.

“What if he should assure you,” went on the stranger, “that you should become king, and crush your enemies: and not only so, but a mightier king than all your forefathers, and even than all who have been beforetime kings of the Angles ?”

Edwin, made more hopeful by these questions, eagerly asserted that such services would command his lifelong gratitude.

Yet once more the stranger enquired, “What if he who thus truly foretold the future were able to give you better counsel, for your life and safety, than your kindred ever dreamed of; would you follow his advice ?”

Edwin readily promised again, that in all things he would listen to the man who should deliver him from his distress, and raise him to a throne.

The stranger then laid his hand on Edwin’s head and said, “When this token is given to you, remember our conversation and fulfil your promise,” and with this, so runs the story, he vanished.

Edwin was still sitting on the stone, glad at heart but much perplexed, when his friend returned with a bright face.

“Rise up,” he cried, “and go to bed without fear. The king has changed his mind. He told the queen about the matter in private, and she persuaded him that it was no wise meet for a great king to sell for gold a good friend in distress, and thereby to lose his honour.”

It was true, on this occasion Redwald's wife had proved his better angel, and, having determined to stand by his friend, he helped him to a throne. Without waiting for Ethelfrid to declare war, he at once marched with a large army against him. Ethelfrid, thus taken by surprise, was defeated and slain on the east bank of the River Idle,* and Edwin, the hunted exile, became King of Northumbria.

It was eight years after this that he married Ethelburga, "the darling." The prophecy of the mysterious stranger had come true, he had prospered greatly; but as yet the sign, with which his unknown friend had vanished, remained unfulfilled.

* "Probably at Idleton near Retford." Bright, 112.

VII.—CONVERSION OF KING EDWIN

(Bede, ii. 9-13)

Upon Paulinus now rested the hopes of the mission at Canterbury; but, at first, he had no good news to send his distant friends. The heathen folk of Yorkshire would have none of his teaching; and his duties were limited to the queen and her attendants, whilst waiting for an opportunity of influencing the king.

With Easter it came in an attempted assassination. Edwin, all unsuspecting of danger, gave audience to an envoy from the sub-king of the West Saxons. This envoy, whose name was Eumer, had concealed upon him a two-edged dagger dipped in poison; and whilst delivering his pretended message, he made a rush at the king.

So sudden and unexpected was the attack, that Lilla, the king's faithful attendant, had no shield at hand with which to ward off the blow. Quick as thought, therefore, he threw himself before the king, and received it in his own body. But it was so sure and deadly, that it pierced through the slain knight and wounded the king as well; and in the confusion which followed another knight was slain, before the pretended envoy could be secured.

On that same most holy night of Easter Day the queen gave birth to a daughter, and the king gave thanks to his gods for his good fortune. Paulinus was present; he praised the name of the Lord Christ, at the same time assuring the king that he had been praying about the happy event.

The king was well pleased to hear it. He had not forgotten the promise made on his marriage; he now renewed it. "I will," he said solemnly, "become myself a servant



FIG. 7.—ANGLO-SAXON ART. A PAGE FROM A MANUSCRIPT
(“ALCUIN’S BIBLE”).

of Christ if I return victorious from the war with that evil king, whose envoy so nearly slew me." Not content with this, as a pledge of his sincerity, he handed over his infant daughter to be baptized; and on the following Whit Sunday the Princess Eanfled was made a member of Christ's Church, with eleven others of her household, being the first-fruits of the race of Northumbria.

In due time the king returned from a most successful campaign, in which he slew, or took captive, all who had conspired to murder him. But if Paulinus expected his hopes to be realized forthwith, he was doomed to disappointment; for Edwin, trained in caution from his earliest years in the rough school of adversity, was not to be hurried in so grave a matter. He renounced his idols, and became a pupil of Paulinus; but there he paused, no longer a heathen, but also not yet a Christian.

It was a trying time for all concerned, for not only the bishop but also the chief men of Edwin's court were consulted upon the momentous step he proposed to take. The Pope, also, displayed the liveliest interest in the matter. He wrote to the king, urging him to break up his idols, as a practical proof that they were but wood and stone; and also to his queen, entreating her to use her influence for her husband's welfare.

Still Edwin wavered, listening to all that could be said, but utterly unable to decide. It was, in truth, a hard task for the proud and self-reliant king "to humble himself to the way of salvation, and to receive the mystery of the life-giving cross." Often, he spent long hours entirely alone, fighting the matter out by himself, but arriving at no definite result.

It was clear that something more than argument was needed if the king was to be convinced; and Paulinus had one last weapon in reserve, either from private information



FIG. 8.—“DOST THOU REMEMBER THIS SIGN?”

or more direct knowledge. One day, while Edwin was sitting alone, thinking and yet thinking, but unable to resolve, Paulinus, the man of God, came to him, laid his right hand on his head, and asked him: "Dost thou remember this sign?"*

The allusion to the mysterious stranger struck home at once. Trembling with awe Edwin was about to throw himself at the bishop's feet, but he restrained him.

"Behold," he said, "by God's grace you have escaped from the enemy's hand. Of His gift have you received the kingdom you so greatly desired. Delay not to carry out your part. Embrace the faith, and keep the commandments of Him who has placed you on your throne. By me He tells you that, if henceforth you are obedient to His will, you shall hereafter be a partaker of His kingdom which is in heaven."

"I will do so," replied Edwin, "it is my wish and my bounden duty; but, first, let me confer with my chief friends, that, if possible, they with me may become Christians."

Paulinus willingly agreed. If his patience had been sorely tried by Edwin's long delays, they also proved that he was intensely sincere. Once a Christian he would be always a Christian; his whole nature would revolt from the time-serving policy of Redwald, his former patron. But it was important that his subjects should adopt the new faith with their king; and for this end a great council was called.

* It is just possible that Paulinus had been sent on a mission to Redwald's court, and was himself "the mysterious stranger." See Plummer, ii. 93.

VIII.—EDWIN'S COUNCIL ACCEPTS CHRISTIANITY

(Bede, ii. 9, 13, 14, 16)

The council duly met near "Goodmanham, some twenty-three miles from York,"* one of the chief centres of the prevailing idolatry. The king himself opened the proceedings by enquiring of each present, in turn, what he thought of the new religion. An unexpected ally spoke in favour of the change, in Coifi, the high priest and founder of the heathen temple hard by; but his arguments did not equal his courage, for they were frankly based upon self-interest.

"Take heed, O king, to what is now preached to us, for my own opinion is that our present religion is little worth. None have served the gods more earnestly than I, yet others have been advanced in your royal favour, while I have been passed by. But if the gods had any power they would rather have helped me. Let us then examine this new doctrine, and if it is better than the old, let us adopt it."

Far different was the tone of the next speaker, whose vivid parable touched the hearts of all present. "I will tell you, O king, what methinks man's present life is like. Sometimes, while you are sitting at supper in your hall, made warm and comfortable by a fire in the midst, while wild storms of rain and snow sweep down outside—sometimes a sparrow flies in at one door and, passing through the hall, goes out at another. For a little time it lingers in the warmth, safe from the winter's storm, but soon, passing from winter to winter, it vanishes out of sight. So is

* Bright, 121, on the account of the Council of Godmundingaham.

the life of man, for a brief space it lasts; but what comes before it or what follows after it, of this we know nothing. If then the new teaching gives us more certainty, by all means let us follow it."

Others also gave their opinion, and then, at the right moment, Coifi suggested that Paulinus should be heard. All were impressed, but none more than the high priest, who once more spoke out with the boldness which belonged to him.

"I have long been conscious," he cried, "that what we worship is nothing; the more I sought the truth the less I found it. Now I openly assert, that it is here in this teaching; wherein is offered to us life, salvation, and eternal happiness. Let us then destroy those useless temples and altars, and give them up to the curse and the flame."

Edwin was nothing loth, and having publicly accepted the Gospel, he turned to the high priest and asked: "And who shall begin the work of desecration?"

"That will I do," was Coifi's prompt reply. "Who could more fittingly destroy, as a lesson to all, what once I revered in my folly?" Now, it was unlawful for a high priest to bear arms, or to ride except on a mare; therefore, in defiance of his former creed, he called upon the king to provide him with a horse and arms.

Then, mounting the king's horse, with a sword girt upon his thigh and lance in hand, he rode upon his way; and when the people saw it they thought that he was mad. Arriving at the temple, he hurled his spear at it; and bade his companions set fire to it, with all that belonged to it.

Thus, by a national act, Edwin and his people accepted Christianity. At York, on the site now occupied by its glorious cathedral, he caused a wooden chapel to be hastily reared, and there, after due instruction, the following Easter he was baptized, with his nobles and many of his subjects.

He was now at the height of his power and glory; for he was supreme in England, and his actual dominions reached "from the Humber to the Forth," and included "Edwin's burgh, now Edinburgh, on its northern frontier."*

This vast tract of country became, as it were, one huge diocese with the king's conversion; for his people were now as eager to embrace Christianity as they had once been hostile to the teaching of Paulinus. There were plenty of hearers; the only difficulty was to reach them, and for this, alas, the labourers were few indeed!

There was first the bishop himself, and his very appearance was so striking that it left an abiding impression behind him. He was very tall but had a slight stoop. His hair was black, and his face thin, its chief feature being a slender but aquiline nose. Such was Paulinus, and he had an able assistant in James the Deacon, a man of great zeal and fame in Christ's Church, whom the bishop had brought with him from Kent.

James the Deacon was his only helper, for no one else assisted him, sent either by Justus or the Pope, as Paulinus had himself been sent to Augustine by Gregory. But what one man could do, working almost alone, he did—"with his whole heart he set himself to call the nation, to which he was sent, to the knowledge of the truth."

In long missionary journeys he attempted to meet the demands made upon him. Once, he arrived, with the court, at the royal country seat of "Yevering under the Cheviots"; and stayed with the king and queen for thirty-six days,† teaching and baptizing. From morning till night Paulinus devoted himself to this work, and from all the villages and places in the countryside the people came to hear him. First, he instructed them carefully in the word of Christ's salvation, and then, when taught, he baptized them in the

* Bright, 123 and note.

† Bright, 125, on Bede, ii. 14.

River Glen which flows hard by. It must have been a marvellous scene, and his name is still preserved in the district, in Pallinsburn, where a "lake, probably used for baptisms, lies some three miles off the Tweed."*

Farther south, near York, his visits were less brief, for there he had fixed his see in accordance, no doubt, with Gregory's express directions to Augustine. Yorkshire was then known as Edwin's native land of Deira, which he had inherited from his father Ella; names once used with double meaning by the great Pope, which would give them a pleasant sound to the bishop's ears. Here then he often stayed with the king, and baptized in the River Swale where it flows by the village of Catterick.

Near York,† also, Paulinus found time to build a church, whose altar of stone long survived the wooden building which once enclosed it. But no church at all was built in the north, and as a rule no altar, not even a place for prayer, for preaching; or baptizing was left as a trace of his presence. Such then were the labours of Paulinus; moving rapidly from place to place he first taught the people, and then baptized them in the nearest stream. More than this he could not accomplish; the wonder was that he did so much, being wellnigh alone and single-handed.

* Bright, 125; Pallinsburn is not mentioned by Bede.

† On the exact spot mentioned in Bede, ii. 14. See Bright, 126.

IX.—COLLAPSE OF THE MISSION IN NORTHUMBRIA

(Bede, ii. 15, 16, 20)

Edwin's supremacy reached beyond the Humber, and so also did the bishop's untiring zeal. Heavily weighted as he was in Northumbria, he found time to convert Blœcca, the prefect or chief officer at Lincoln, who with his whole house turned to the Lord. And at Lincoln, in a noble church of stone whose roofless walls were visible long afterwards, Paulinus consecrated Honorius, as the successor of Justus, and fifth Archbishop of Canterbury. In Nottinghamshire he also baptized a multitude of people, in the presence of the king, though the exact spot is a matter of conjecture.*

These marvellous journeys would in truth have been impossible without Edwin. He was the chief king of his time; and wherever he went he moved in pomp and state, with a banner called "Tufa" borne before him, apparently a tuft of feathers on a staff. To maintain his position, as the supreme ruler in the land, he made the roads his special care, and at every clear spring by the wayside he caused a stake to be placed, with drinking cups of brass attached; and none durst use them for any other purpose, so greatly was he loved or feared. The peace of Edwin was, in fact, so celebrated that it was a proverb, long after his day, that a woman with her child could walk through the island, from sea to sea, unharmed.

Only a born leader of men could have established this settled state of affairs in that iron age, and it accounts for

* See Bright, 128; Plummer, ii. 109, on Bede, ii. 16.

the vast scale on which Paulinus scattered the Word of Life. Practically alone, he relied on time for a future harvest, and in time it was to be gathered in, but not by his hands. In him the saying of our Lord was to be fulfilled—"One soweth and another reapeth."

If Edwin's royal authority was invaluable to Paulinus, it also brought a blessing to the land of his exile, for he persuaded Redwald's son, Eorpwald, to become a Christian as firm and consistent as himself. The result was tragic, for Eorpwald was shortly afterwards murdered; and thus Redwald's fears were justified, which made him combine faith and idolatry in one temple. But, after three years, the martyred king was succeeded by his brother, Sigebert, who in exile had become a Christian, and refused to yield an inch to heathen opposition. In this he was ably seconded by a bishop named Felix, that is "Happy," who, coming at that time to Canterbury, was sent by Honorius into East Anglia, and both king and bishop worked together with the happiest results.

This venture, in what is now roughly speaking Norfolk and Suffolk, which was started by Edwin and developed from Canterbury, was destined to be the sole success of Augustine's mission outside Kent. A fatal close awaited the immense labours of Paulinus in the north; on Edwin he had relied and with Edwin he fell.

The power and glory of this king, not to speak of his fervent faith in Christ, had raised for him many enemies. Heathenism was still a living and an active force, and it had at last found a virtual champion in Penda, King of Mercia, who in his day slew no less than five Christian kings.

His first victim was Edwin himself, who perished at Hatfield, in Yorkshire, in 633. It was at York that the gory head of Paulinus' firm supporter and friend was

buried, in the porch of the unfinished church of stone, square in form, with which Edwin had begun to surround the wooden chapel in which he had been baptized.

Meanwhile Penda, "the Strenuous,"* with his ally Cadwallon, a British king, "the one a pagan and the other a barbarian more cruel than a pagan," with fierce and brutal zeal began to lay waste the land. It was an added horror of the time that this ally was a Christian, of the same type of faith as those British bishops with whom Augustine had failed to come to terms. But Christian though he was, his vengeance on the Saxon foes of his race was terrible; for he spared none, not even woman or child.

With Edwin slain and Christ, as it were, thus warring against Christ, the courage of Paulinus gave way. All his labours were shattered at one blow, and we need not be surprised that he sank beneath the strain. Taking the queen with him, he went back by sea to Kent, to spend his last days in the vacant see of Rochester.

A bitter memento of the past followed him to this refuge, and was long kept there, in the shape of a pall which the Pope had sent to him as Archbishop of York; but it was never worn by him.† A large golden cross and a golden chalice, hallowed for the service of the altar, which he had carried off, were also long shown in the church of Canterbury. But all was not lost in Northumbria with the flight of Paulinus. James the Deacon remained behind; and teaching and baptizing he took much spoil from the enemy.

He was to become a link with a new order of things. After its heavy defeat in the north, as well as in Essex, the mission at Canterbury sank into obscurity; though it was destined, at last, to regain its position as the first to

* Hen. Hunt, iii. 33, and elsewhere. See Bright, note 132.

† See Plummer, ii. 117.

bring the good news of Christ to the English race. England, therefore, as a whole would never have become Christian, unless the labours of Augustine and Paulinus had been taken up by those who could complete the work which they had but begun.

X.—THE ANCIENT HEATHENISM*

With the death of the glorious Edwin, a fresh stage begins in the conversion of the English. Let us pause then for a brief account of the old religion which the Christian faith was to replace; the more especially since the appearance of Penda, "the Strenuous," upon the scene gives a yet more vivid touch to the struggle for life or death, between the two.

The names of the days of the week are familiar to us, and they give us, when they are enlarged, the names of some of these heathen gods:

Sunday	..	Sun-day.	Thursday	..	Thor's-day.
Monday	..	Moon-day.	Friday	..	Frigga's-day.
Tuesday	..	Tiw's-day.	Saturday	..	Sœtere's-day.
Wednesday	..	Woden's-day.			

The first two days tell us that nature was worshipped. This was because it inspired awe and dread. When the thunder rolled it was said, "It is Thor's hammer in the sky," and of an earthquake, "It is Loki shuddering in his torments."

Fear also hung like a gloomy cloud over the most familiar things of life. In the great forest, with its deep shadows and rustling leaves, dwelt dwarfs, and elves, and fairies. Spirits lurked in its stones and trees, and from these nameless terrors sprang the belief in magic which made Ethelbert refuse to meet Augustine, except in the open air.

* Bede, unfortunately, gives no account of the old idolatry. The legends used in this chapter, are quoted in a very abbreviated form, from "The Heroes of Asgard," by A. and E. Keary, unless otherwise stated.

There was, however, a brighter side to this heathen creed. Odin the Allfather protected men from dwarfs and giants. His day was Wednesday, Frigga was his wife, and Tiw and Thor some of his children. These gods were like men, only more powerful, wiser, and stronger; and some of the legends about them are worth repeating, even in Christian days.

Odin, we are told in one, came to the well where wit and wisdom lie hidden; but when he was about to drink he was told that he must first sacrifice his right eye. It was a heavy price, and Odin pondered long and deep. At last he decided that it was worth the cost, so he plucked out his right eye and cast it from him. Then, and not before, he received a draught of the well's water, and he felt, as he drank, as if there were a fountain of wisdom springing up within him well worth the suffering and loss he had had to endure.

Here is another legend. Odin, with his wife and sons, came to the bridge Bifrost—the rainbow which stretches from earth to heaven. The whole party were about to cross when Thor was stopped.

"I am very sorry," said the guardian of Bifrost, "but you are so strong and heavy that the bridge will break down under your weight, or take fire from your iron heels. Yonder are the clouds; use your great strength, press through them, and you will soon join the rest."

Thor began to sulk. "Why should I be turned away?" he asked in disgust.

"Because you are strong," was the quiet answer; and Odin, his father, also urged him to be a true hero, and not flinch. So Thor was persuaded; bravely he fought his way through the clouds, tossing them back with his mighty arms, till at last he rejoined his friends, and saw with them the three Fates who weave the destinies of life.

And if the gods thus learnt wisdom through suffering, and fought their way to success, it must be so also with men. It was a fierce creed and it bred fierce worshippers. Heaven was to them the reward of the valiant. With such heroes Odin was pleased; and these he chose to dwell with him on high, drinking at feasts of victory, enlivened by tales of heroic deeds, and fighting in battles which left no wound behind them. Courage, therefore, became almost the only virtue, and cowardice the one crime which nothing could wipe out. This theory of life was by no means without its value, and, perhaps, for this reason it long survived the old idolatry, even in its extreme form. The following story, for instance, might well have belonged to heathen times:

"Did he die with his wounds behind him or before?" asked a Christian father concerning his dead son.

"Before," was the reply.

"I rejoice to hear it," said the father; "no other death was fitting for him or for me."

Later on a mortal sickness seized him. "Shame on me," he muttered, "that I have not fallen in battle, but must needs perish like a sick cow."

"Arm me," he went on, "gird my sword by my side, place my helmet on my head, my shield in my left hand, my battle-axe inlaid with gold in my right; as a soldier I have lived, and like a soldier will I die." So, armed at all points, this stout warrior met death, the last enemy of man.*

To men who believed that fighting was the one end of life, a gospel of peace and forgiveness was likely to prove a stumbling-block. Yet there was an opening for its truths even in the old religion; sin was not unknown to these heathen warriors, and the sorrow which comes from sin.

* Hen. Hunt, vi. 22, 24. The father was Sigeweard, Earl of Northumbria, who died in 1055 on the eve of the Conquest. See Kemble, "Saxons in England," i. 302 note.

Baldur the Beautiful was the darling of the gods, and, to preserve him from all harm, his mother, Frigga, took an oath of all created things that none should hurt him; but the mistletoe was excepted as too young to understand.

Loki, the mischief worker, managed to find out the secret.

He was too cunning to do the deadly deed himself, so while the gods were having fine sport, pretending to kill Baldur by using him as a mark for their weapons, he placed a sprig of mistletoe in the hands of one of their number.

"Throw," he said, and Baldur fell, and the shadow of death covered the whole earth.

Loki's crimes met with a punishment which was terrible indeed. Caught at last, in spite of his many disguises, he was bound hand and foot upon a rock; a serpent was suspended over him, and every moment a burning drop of poison fell down upon his shuddering face. Yet even Loki found someone to pity him, vile as he was. His wife was faithful, when all denounced him; she held over the wretched sufferer a cup, with which she caught the poison; and only while it was being emptied did Loki writhe in anguish.

Sin punished, yet claiming pity in its doom, that was a truth akin to the Gospel. So also did the death of the darling of the gods prepare the way for the knowledge of God's love in Christ; who died, indeed, but rose again, the first-fruits of them that sleep.

To imitate His great example requires a higher courage than that which our fierce forefathers prized so much. Once they realized that all that was best in their idolatry was preserved in Christianity, its success was certain. It might have to win its way through more than one crushing defeat, but it must in the end prevail.

PART II.—LINDISFARNE MISSION

XI.—OSWALD, THE MAN BELOVED OF GOD

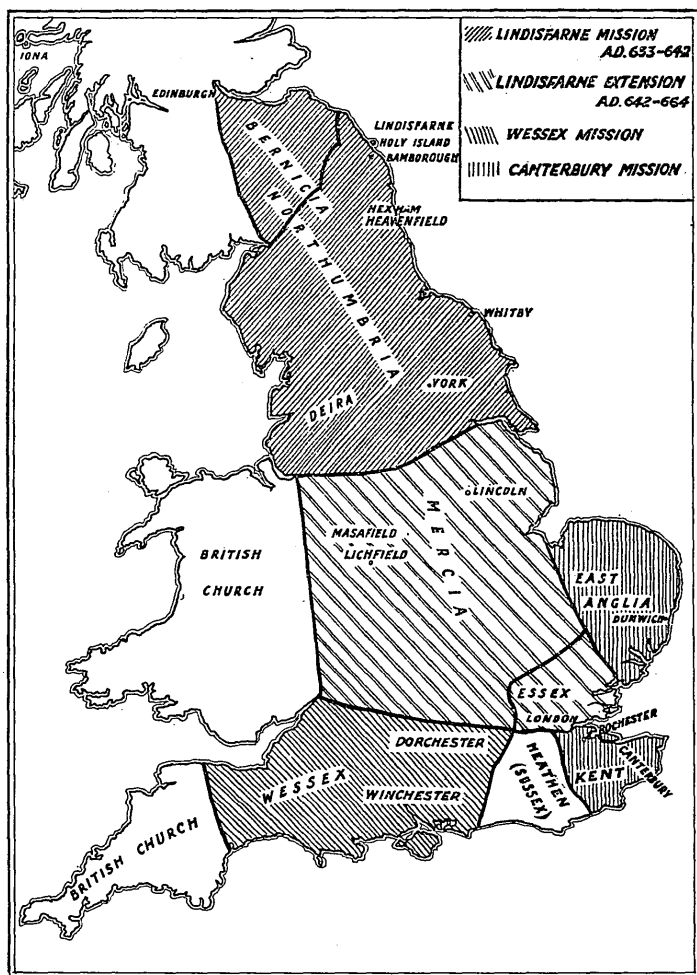
(Bede, iii. 1-5, 17)

Let us now return to Northumbria. Shortly after the slaughter of Edwin at Hatfield, Penda withdrew his forces, but Cadwallon was left behind, and he carried on the war with brutal fury.

The last depth of despair was reached in the unhappy kingdom when the two princes who succeeded to the throne of Edwin endeavoured to win the British king's goodwill by renouncing their faith in Christ. Their apostasy availed them nothing, for he slew them both, and their shameful end was ascribed to the vengeance of heaven. Cadwallon's triumph seemed complete, and that year of doom, when Northumbria lay crushed beneath the heel of her merciless foe, was ever after looked upon as "unhappy and hateful to all good men."

In those dark and dreadful days, the wretched Christians were cheered by the constancy of James the Deacon, who bravely remained at his post; and at last the tide turned. A brother of one of the apostate princes was marching against the foe. This was Oswald, "the man beloved of God," who from the first boldly proclaimed himself a Christian.

He advanced with an army, small indeed in numbers but strengthened by faith in Christ, and before the battle began he caused a cross of wood to be hastily made; with his own hands he held it up, while some of his men filled in



LINDISFARNE MISSION, A.D. 633-664; WESSEX MISSION, CIRCA A.D. 634-664; CANTERBURY MISSION.

the soil, and the cross erect, he called upon his soldiers to join with him in prayer.

"Let us all kneel," he cried, "and beseech the aid of God Almighty, the living and the true, that of His mercy He may deliver us from our proud and cruel foe. For He knoweth that our cause is just, and for the salvation of our race."

At early dawn the battle began, with Oswald's bold attack upon the immensely superior forces of the enemy. It was successful, in spite of the British king's proud boast that none could resist his troops. The defeat became a rout, and at the Denisbury Cadwallon fell, amidst slaughter so grim and terrible that it passed into a proverb. "That slaughter of Cadwalla's men that stayed the Denis' flow."*

This was the victory of Heavenfield,† for so, by a kind of prophecy, the place had been called long before. Bitter must the news have been to Penda, for the defeat at Hatfield was wiped out at a blow, and in one moment a bright change had come over the fortunes of Northumbria.

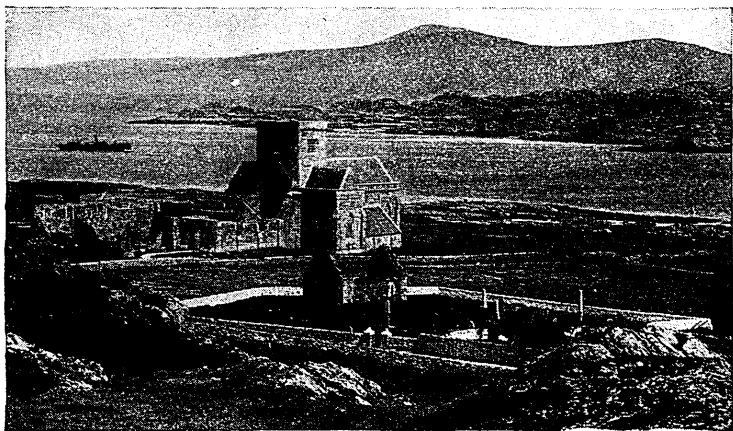
Raised to the throne, like Edwin, upon the battlefield, Oswald was from the first a fervent servant of Christ, for he did not need a Paulinus to convert him. He was the son of Edwin's uncle and enemy, Ethelfrid; and on his father's downfall and death he had fled, as a young lad, to the famous monastery of Iona. There he had been baptized and had grown up in exile, and, therefore, it was but natural, when he returned as king, that he should apply to Iona, rather than to Canterbury, for a bishop for his subjects. This request began a new page in the conversion of the English, Rome and Canterbury being replaced by Iona; and the debt of English Christianity to this remote

* Hen. Hunt, iii. 34; Bright, tr. 138.

† For the site of the battle, and its date, A.D. 634, see Bright, 137, 8, and Plummer, ii. 122.

island was to prove at least as great as, if not greater than, its debt to the Apostolic See.*

Disaster at first awaited the king's plans. The missionary sent to Oswald was so austere that, after preaching for some time in vain to the English race, he retired in disgust. This was his account of himself on his return home: "Fierce, rough, and untamable, it is useless to attempt to convert such barbarians."



[Photo by Valentine.]

FIG. 9.—IONA AND ITS MONASTERY.

A gentle voice was heard in protest. "I think, brother, you must have been too hard and severe with their untaught minds. Did you not forget the Apostle's precept about

* Iona is a small island on the west coast of Scotland; and its celebrated monastery was founded from Ireland by S. Columba, an Irishman by birth. Its monks, therefore, shared the customs of the British Church, notably in the matter of Easter. Alas that it must be added, that though its sister communion in Ireland took so large a part in the conversion of the English, the hostility of the British Church to the Saxon foe remained as keen as ever. They gave no help to the missions from Iona any more than to those from Canterbury; though no divergent customs stood in the way.

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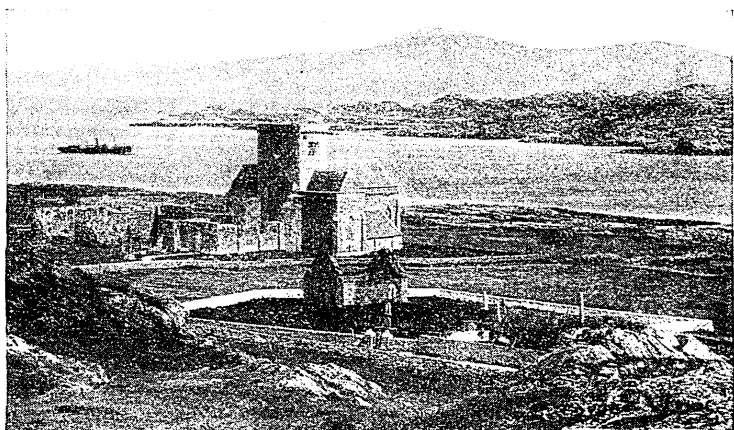
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milk for babes, and is it not because you expected too much that you have failed?"

All eyes were turned to the speaker, a monk named Aidan. "This is the right man to send to these ignorant unbelievers," it was unanimously agreed; and he was duly consecrated, and sent to Northumbria.



[Photo by B. C. Clayton.]

FIG. 10.—PRESENT-DAY RUINS OF LINDISFARNE.

Aidan's first step must have greatly pleased the king. With the royal sanction he began by moving the see, which Paulinus had founded at York, to Lindisfarne on the east coast of Northumbria; then an island twice a day with the ebb and flow of the tide, and thus resembling Iona, so dear to the memory of king and bishop.

At this episcopal see of Lindisfarne was a monastery, where Aidan, when in residence, lived as a monk; and in sight of this Holy Island was the castle of Bamborough,

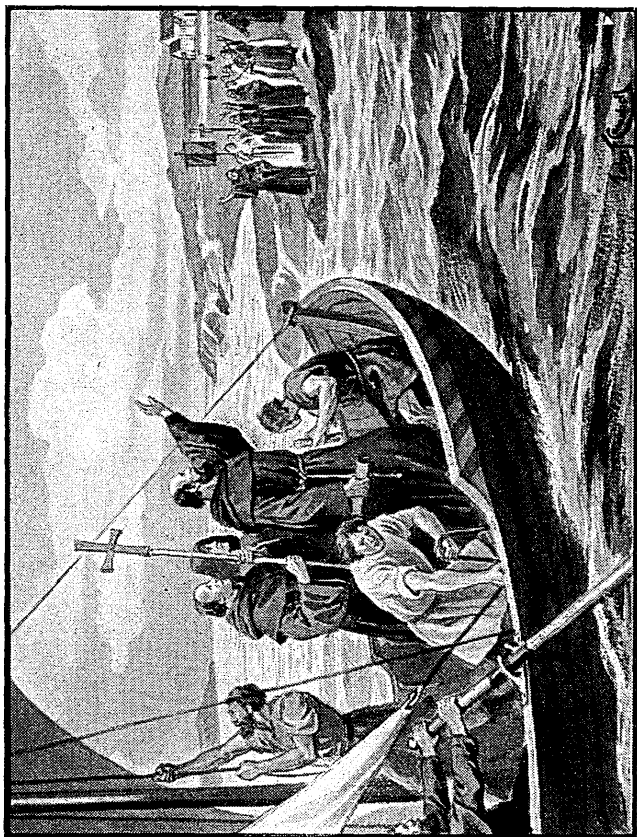


FIG. 11.—S. AIDAN LEAVING IONA.

on the mainland, near which was a church, with a chamber attached to it for the bishop's private use. From this spot, or from other royal residences, Aidan would set forth

on his preaching tours; and the royal fortress, keeping watch and ward, with the church beneath it surrounded by a few fields which was all the lowly bishop cared to call his own, was a type of the close union between king and bishop. For Aidan's knowledge of the English tongue was imperfect, and when he preached Oswald was often present, acting the part of an interpreter; and it was a beautiful sight to behold the king explaining, to the chief men of his court, the heavenly doctrine of the man of God.

This happy state of things attracted other helpers from Ireland, from whence support naturally came, because of the connection with Iona. Churches appeared in several places, monasteries also were founded and endowed by the royal bounty, where English boys and their elders were taught regular discipline by these monks of a foreign race.

Great, therefore, was the change from the days of Paulinus, for at the time when Oswald with his own hands had set up the "banner of the holy cross," before the battle of Heavenfield, there was "no sign of the Christian faith, no church, nor altar in all that region." Thus, the seed which Paulinus had sown bore its fruit, in the labours of the devoted monks who now appeared upon the scene.*

* Bede specifies Bernicia, in the northern province of Northumbria; Deira, the chief scene of Paulinus' labours, forming its southern portion. Bede, iii. 2.

XII.—OSWALD AND AIDAN

(Bede, ii. 15; iii. 5, 6, 9, 12, 14, 16, 18, 19, 26, 28)

Oswald's reign, short as it was, but eight years in all, was to assure the final success of Christianity in this country; while of his bishop it has been said that "Augustine was the Apostle of Kent, but Aidan was the Apostle of England."* It is fortunate, therefore, that much has been preserved to us about these two heroes of the faith.

Let us begin with Oswald. His personal assistance in the conversion of his subjects must not blind us to his greatness as a sovereign. Far from neglecting affairs of State for the sake of religion, he was every whit a king, and all Britain acknowledged him as overlord. This was more than even Edwin or Ethelbert could lay claim to, so that no ruler had ever been so great before him.

Majesty and glory unequalled were his, yet, in the height of his power, he remained "humble, kind, and generous to the poor and strangers." It is this humility of mind, amidst the splendours of royalty, which makes Oswald worthy of undying reverence and admiration, and its secret is to be found in his private life.

Often, he continued in prayer from the early morning thanksgiving till it was day, and, from his constant custom of praying or giving thanks to the Lord, he was wont, even when seated upon his throne, to hold his hands upturned upon his knees, so habitually was the thought of God's presence ever before his mind.†

* Lightfoot, "Leaders in the Northern Church," 11.

† It was usual to retire to rest again after "Matins," the first of the seven Canonical hours; see pp. 96, 115, 127, 184. See Plummer, i. xxvi and note.

Such was Oswald, a prince of men, and he had a bishop entirely to his mind. Utterly unworldly, Aidan's missionary journeys were taken entirely on foot, never on horseback except from necessity; and the long hours upon the road were passed in meditating on texts, or in learning Psalms. These humble habits of life had a positive advantage. Entering easily into conversation with rich and



FIG. 12.—S. AIDAN PREACHING.

poor alike, the chance meeting often became an opportunity of speaking a word in season; as the bishop urged the heathen to embrace the faith, or exhorted believers to alms and good works.

Such a man would naturally shun the pomp and state which of necessity attends royalty; and Oswald, with kindly thoughtfulness, rarely invited him to his table. When he was present at a banquet it was with but one or two of his

clergy, and after taking a little food Aidan made haste to quit the festive scene, and join his brethren to read and pray; for he had, as already stated, a church and bedchamber near the king's palace at Bamborough, where he was wont to go and stay before setting out upon one of his preaching tours.

One Easter Day he dined with the king, when a silver dish, full of royal dainties, was set upon the table, just as grace was about to be said.

At this moment, one of Oswald's officers, whose duty it was to relieve the poor, entered and said, that a crowd of poor folk had gathered together from all the countryside, and were sitting in the street begging an alms of the king.

Oswald ordered that the royal dainties just set upon the table should be carried out to them, and the dish itself broken up and divided amongst them.

Aidan's heart warmed at the sight and, seizing the king's right hand, he exclaimed in a transport of delight, "May this hand never grow old"; and, long after the king's death, the hand and arm were preserved in a silver shrine, kept undecayed, it was devoutly believed, by reason of the bishop's blessing.*

Piety is too often united with weakness, but Aidan resembled his master in this, that his religion made him the more zealous in the duties of his office. Kind to the poor, he rebuked the vices of the rich with all authority becoming a bishop. Far from currying favour with the great when they visited him at Lindisfarne, he gave them food and hospitality, but no more. And if it was intimated that a bribe would be acceptable, the courtier was speedily undeceived, and sent away as empty as he came.

Sometimes his close friendship with the king exposed

* The relic was preserved in S. Peter's Church, Bamborough. See Bright, 148 note.

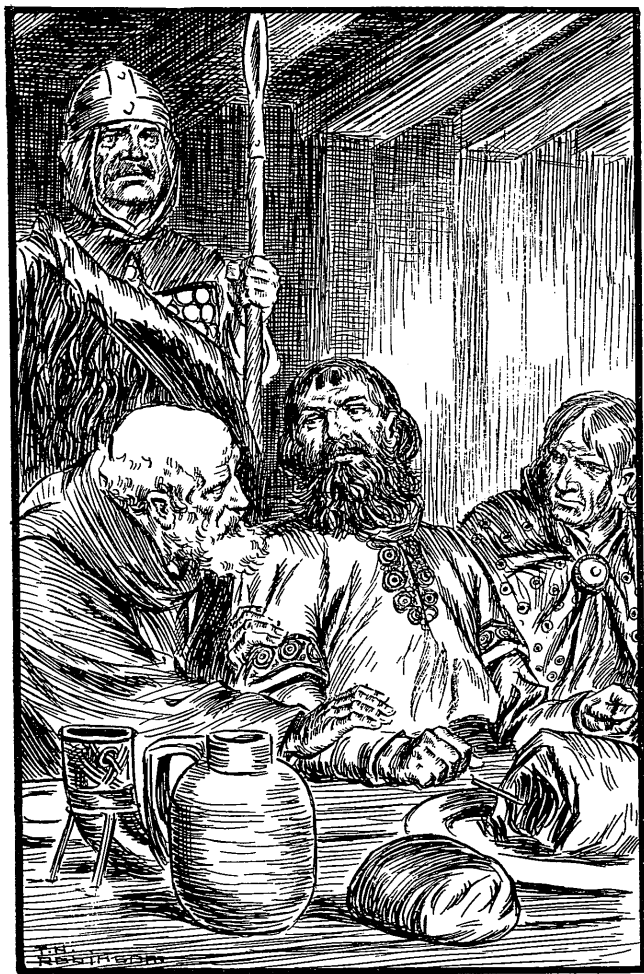


FIG. 13.—“MAY THIS HAND NEVER GROW OLD.”

him to gifts of money, in the hope of purchasing his goodwill; but Aidan promptly spent the bribe upon the poor, or in ransoming those who had been unjustly sold into slavery; for he was ever a friend to the poor and a father to the wretched.

A strong and deep-minded man, as well as saint, Aidan felt that in education lay the best hope for the future; and, though to look after boys must have been a sore hindrance to a bishop who was always on the move, he formed a class of twelve of the most promising English lads, and kept them always under his eye. Many of these boys became famous as men, and in them the bishop's zeal survived long after his death.*

His influence, indeed, was extraordinary with young and old alike. Many men and women, stirred up by his example, fasted on Wednesdays and Fridays, except during the fifty days after Easter; and when he was dead and gone the little islet of Farne, nearly two miles from the city of Bamborough, was often visited, and the spot shown where Aidan was wont to sit, entirely alone, in prayer and meditation.

With Oswald as king and Aidan as bishop, Christianity advanced by leaps and bounds in Northumbria, especially with the help their great piety attracted from Iona and Ireland. But Christ's cause was to receive a fresh blow elsewhere at the hands of the mighty Penda.

Edwin's efforts in East Anglia will be remembered, followed by the advent of King Sigebert and Bishop Felix, who achieved a great success, delivering "all that land from long-standing unrighteousness and unhappiness." In its sovereign the bishop found a most willing helper, and when Sigebert founded a school, Felix made it his delightful task to provide it with teachers from Kent.

* Eata and Chad are the two lads specifically mentioned.

But Sigebert was not like Oswald, great as king as well as saint. Probably influenced by an Irish monk named Fursey, whose visions of another world gave him a great reputation, he resigned his crown to his kinsman, and retired to a monastery which he had built for himself.

This step left his kingdom exposed to the most active heathen in the land. Penda swept down upon this country, where schools were being opened, and a king had dared to become a miserable monk. Hastily its people summoned Sigebert from his retirement, but the warrior instinct was dead in him. He refused to fight, and would only consent to carry a wand, with which to direct his soldiers. But they were not encouraged by the sight, remembering the days when he had been reckoned one of the great commanders of the age.

If they were dispirited, the enemy were made the more eager for the fray; and the slaughter of two more Christian kings gave fresh renown to Penda's brilliant reputation.

This magnificent victory had, however, but little result, when he finally retired once more to Mercia, since Felix, the bishop, was left to continue his blessed work in the see he had founded at Dunwich. Moreover, the new king, Anna, who reigned for many years, was, with his family, a pattern of all that a Christian king should be.*

* For the family of Anna see Supplement, ch. xvi.

XIII.—INDEPENDENT MISSION IN WESSEX: SUNSHINE AND STORM

(Bede, iii. 2, 7-14, 20; v. 24)

Penda had now become the greatest heathen warrior of his age, and his kingdom of Mercia was admirably fitted to be a stronghold of the old idolatry. Placed in the very centre of England, it formed a big black blot of heathenism untouched as yet by Christian effort; for no missionary dared show his face near the court of one who had already slain three Christian kings, and who was to add two more to his list of victims. But all round this heathen kingdom the new religion was advancing. Crushed for the moment in Northumbria and East Anglia it had soon revived, and in the south it was also winning its way.

In Kent, Eadbald was succeeded by his son Erconbert, in 640. He reigned for twenty-four years, and was the first English king to enforce by law the destruction of idols, and the observance of Lent. It was early in his long reign that Archbishop Honorius consecrated the first native bishop, in Ithamar, a Kentish man, as the successor of Paulinus at Rochester. A fresh illustration of the close union between Kent and East Anglia meets us in the next two bishops of English birth, one of whom also hailed from Kent; both being consecrated by the same archbishop to the see founded by Felix under his guidance. Again, before Erconbert's death the chair of S. Augustine itself was filled by the first English archbishop, a Wessex man, who took the Latin name of Deusdedit. This first native archbishop was consecrated by Ithamar, the first native bishop, acting alone a year and a half after the death of Honorius, A.D. 653.

These are dry facts, yet full of interest, since they indicate the settled hold gained by the new religion, in the original home of English Christianity, during the reign of Ethelbert's grandson. But an English archbishop, who was born in Wessex, requires an account of a fresh mission started upon the south coast as early as 634.* Like Augustine, Birinus came direct from Rome. In the presence of the Pope he had made this solemn promise: "I will scatter the seed of our holy faith in the inmost parts of the land of the English, where no teacher has been before me." When, however, he landed in Wessex he found a people so sunk in heathenism that, giving up his original plan, he set to work at once in a field that was waiting to receive him. Birinus had no connection with the Archbishop of Canterbury, but his success was not the less brilliant because he worked alone; and heathen Mercia was now to be hemmed in on the south, as well as on the north and east. Indeed, the Christianity of the north joined hands with this new mission across the territory of the warlike Penda, in the person of the saintly Oswald. At the baptism of Kynegils, the aged King of Wessex, with his people, Oswald received him as his godfather as he came up from the font; and the rejoicings of that great day were prolonged by a marriage feast, when Oswald the godfather became the son-in-law of the royal convert.

A see was founded for Birinus at Dorchester by the two kings, and then Oswald returned with his bride to his northern home. The marriage of this hero of the Christian faith should have a special interest for us; for our present king is the lineal representative of the royal house of Wessex, and its connection with the saintly king gives an added lustre to the throne.

With Oswald, "the most holy and victorious King of Northumbria," as overlord and protector of that faith

* So Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.

which he adorned, the moment would seem to have struck for Christianity to inherit the land; but, in the midst of his career, he was cut off by the same hand which had destroyed the glorious Edwin before him.

A few years after the slaughter of Sigebert in East Anglia, Penda felt strong enough to try conclusions with his overlord. Oswald, it would seem, had reconquered Lincolnshire from Mercia and added it to his dominions; at any rate, it was at Maserfield, in 642, that Penda's next triumph was won.*

Surrounded by the foe, and seeing the day was lost, Oswald died with a last petition for his men on his lips. "O God, have mercy on their souls," said Oswald, falling to the ground. Thus it was recalled in a proverb that his reign closed, as it had begun, with a prayer.

"With the bones of holy men was Maserfield made white"† is another saying which tells us of the shock caused by his death. The fatal news must have brought dismay to every Christian land; in Kent especially, for there Paulinus and Edwin's queen were still living, after their flight from the north.

With inhuman ferocity Penda, in his triumph, spared not the mighty dead, commanding the head, hands, and arms of his foe to be cut off, and placed on stakes in derision. But the next year these remains of the holy king were rescued by his successor; the arms and hands removed to Bamborough, while the head was reverently placed in the church at Lindisfarne.

The body found a final resting-place in the monastery at Bardney, near Lincoln, and of this a strange story is told. At first the monks refused to receive the bones of Oswald. They knew, they said afterwards in shame and sorrow, that he was a holy man; but then they had a grudge against

* For the cause of the war, [and the situation of Maserfield, see Bright, 158.

† Hen. Hunt, iii. 39; Bright, tr. 159.

him, for by right of conquest he had ruled over them. But a wonder rebuked these men of peace in their war against the dead. A pillar of fire, seen nearly throughout Lincolnshire, blazed heavenwards from the waggon in which the remains were left for the night, with but a covering spread over them.

Next day, convinced of their error, the monks washed the bones, and put them in a shrine which they prepared for them within the church. Over this tomb, as if in silent reparation, they placed his banner of purple and gold; a witness to the victorious might, and royal rank of the holy king who slept beneath its shade.

Oswald was not thirty-eight when he died, and it was not wonderful, in that rude age, that the grass seemed more green where he fell, and the very dust of healing power. A large hole, as deep as a man, was made in course of time by those who sought this miraculous cure, and even the chips from the stake on which the head had hung were treasured for a like purpose. Nor need we hesitate to believe that the simplicity of faith which prompted a palsied girl to sleep on the site of the battle, or a boy afflicted with the ague to linger near the shrine, was duly rewarded.

A touching custom of the monks of Hexham, who lived near the scene of Oswald's first victory at Heavenfield, has more meaning for us in our generation. At the church built upon the spot they met year by year, on the day before his death at Maserfield, to sing Psalms, and to say Mass for him the next morning, with hearty thanksgivings "for the gladsome and holy rejoicings of this day."* Thus Oswald's first cross was connected with his last, and like those monks we also give thanks for his life, with its example of true Christlike saintliness.

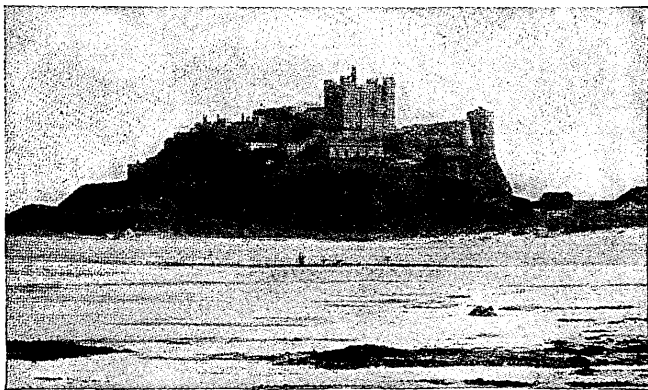
* From the collect used on the anniversary of the saint's death, in which it is spoken of as "the passion of Thy holy servant Oswald." See Lightfoot, "Leaders in the Northern Church," 34 and note.

XIV.—THE LAST YEARS OF AIDAN

(Bede, iii. 14, 16, 17, 23; v. 24)

Once more Penda's opportunity had come for humbling Northumbria to the dust; and he did not neglect it the second time, but swept through the land in person, laying it waste with fire and sword.

His pitiless advance was only stayed by the royal fortress of Bamborough, and the delay called forth all the ferocity



[By permission of the National Society.]

FIG. 14.—BAMBOROUGH CASTLE AT THE PRESENT DAY.

of his nature. From the neighbouring villages he drove out the defenceless inhabitants, and with the beams, planks, reeds, and thatch from their wooden huts he found plenty of material to pile against the walls, and set fire to the town.

The wind and the flames between them made success certain; so thought Penda, so thought also Aidan in his little islet of Farne, whither he had retired to pray and to

him, for by right of conquest he had ruled over them. But a wonder rebuked these men of peace in their war against the dead. A pillar of fire, seen nearly throughout Lincolnshire, blazed heavenwards from the waggon in which the remains were left for the night, with but a covering spread over them.

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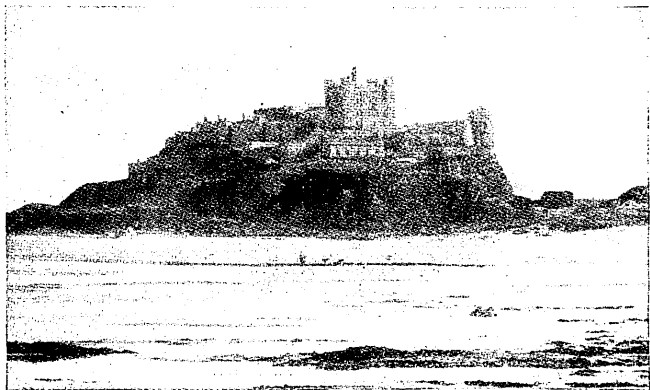
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The wind and the flames between them made success certain; so thought Penda, so thought also Aidan in his little islet of Farne, whither he had retired to pray and to

mourn the untimely death of Oswald. Only two miles away, he could see the smoke driven by the gale, and with weeping eyes and hands lifted up to heaven he cried: "Lord, see how great mischief Penda does."

Suddenly the wind shifted, and the fierce flames from the burning timber were turned against the men of the ruthless king. Scorched, burnt, and scared they fled, and refused to continue the siege, asserting that the city was protected by heaven.

So Penda was compelled to retire again, leaving Northumbria, however, split up into its two parts, and the shadow of its former self. Bernicia, the northern portion, fell to Oswy, the younger brother of Oswald; and Deira to Oswin of the race of King Edwin.

Oswin was to rule but seven years when he was treacherously murdered by his rival. He was tall and handsome, pleasant in speech, graceful in manners, and openhanded to all alike, gentle and simple. Beloved by his subjects, the universal admiration won by such a prince attracted to his court men of the highest rank, from all parts of the country. Eminent also for his piety, among the many virtues which made his life accounted as under a special blessing was his deep humility; and of this a striking story is told. Oswin, like Oswald, was the personal friend of Aidan, and thinking of his many journeys on foot and of the rivers he had to cross, he gave the bishop a horse, fit for a king. This horse, Aidan shortly afterwards handed over to a beggar who besought of him an alms, with all its splendid trappings.

Oswin soon heard of it, and as they were going into dinner together he said to Aidan: "What meant you, my lord bishop, by giving to a beggar that splendid horse I gave to you? Had we not many other horses of less value or other things quite good enough for the poor, without

your giving away my gift which I had intended for your special use ?”

Aidan promptly answered: “What say you, O king, is that son of a mare worth more in your eyes than that son of God ?”

So they went in to dinner, and Aidan, with his one attendant, sat down in his usual place; but the king, who had come in from hunting, stood with his lords by the fire, lost in thought.

Suddenly, he took off his sword and, giving it to one of his lords, threw himself at Aidan’s feet, entreating him not to be angry. “Never, again, will I say a word about this, nor judge as to what or how much of our money you are pleased to give to the sons of God.”

The bishop, starting from his seat, assured him that he was not at all angry. “Sit down to meat,” he said, “and lay aside all sorrow, for there is no need to distress yourself.”

Oswin did so, but now it was Aidan’s turn to be sad, and his tears began to flow.

The priest who attended him noticed it, and asked him in his native language, which no one else understood, why he thus wept.

“I am sure,” replied Aidan, “that our king will not live long, for never before this have I seen a king so humble; and much my mind misgives me that he will soon be hurried out of this life, for the nation does not deserve to have such a ruler.”

His sad forebodings were soon justified. There was a natural jealousy between the two kings who together shared the throne of Edwin and Oswald; but on war breaking out, Oswin determined to disband his men, having learnt that the forces of his rival were larger than his own.

This done, with but one companion he turned aside to

the house of an earl, in whom he had the utmost confidence. It was, alas, entirely misplaced, and he paid for his rashness with his life. The earl betrayed him, and Oswy sent one of his officers and put the two fugitives to death in cold blood.

This dark and treacherous murder was the one crime of Oswy's life; nor did it achieve its object, for he was obliged to allow Oswald's son, Ethelwald, to rule in Deira, in Oswin's place, a source of weakness which nearly cost him his throne. Before turning, however, to the after-history of Oswy, the immediate effect of his deed of blood must be told.

Aidan had survived the death of Oswald, but the miserable end of Oswin, who had been to him a second Oswald, was too great a shock for the old man. Twelve days after the murder he was called to receive his eternal reward, while staying at the royal residence near Bamborough.

So sudden was his last illness, that it was impossible to convey him to his bedroom which adjoined the church. Laid, therefore, on the ground beneath an awning at its west end, and supported by one of its wooden buttresses, he passed quietly away A.D. 651.

Twice was that church burnt down, but each time the buttress escaped, though the holes which fixed it to the roof were burnt through. When it was rebuilt for the third time, the buttress on which Aidan had leant during his last moments was placed inside as an object of piety, and its preservation attributed to a miracle. Indeed, it did serve a useful purpose, in reminding men of the simplicity of the bishop's last hours, a simplicity so entirely in keeping with his "tranquil" life, that his festival was spoken of by the significant name of "Aidan's Rest."*

This festival of S. Aidan, like that of S. Oswald, has

* Lightfoot, "Leaders in the Northern Church," 48.

vanished from the calendar of the Book of Common Prayer, but both are to be restored. As an ideal bishop and an ideal king, their lives unite to make an almost perfect picture of what faith in Christ can accomplish, to be treasured as "a special blessing" to the Church of England, which includes their names among its chief founders.

XV.—THE MISSIONS TO MERCIA AND ESSEX

(Bede, iii. 14, 21-23)

With Aidan's and Oswald's deaths the golden dawn of Christianity in England passed away. Oswy was no saint like his brother, but he atoned for his great crime in a nobler spirit than by merely founding a monastery, that prayers might be said daily for his victim and for himself. Twice, during his long and troubled reign of twenty-eight years, he started a fresh venture among the heathen, and finally, before he died, he was the chief means of uniting the scattered missions into one Church.

Before this last step could be taken, the vast blot of heathenism represented by Mercia had to be wiped out, and that this was begun in the lifetime of the mighty Penda himself was due to Oswy.

When Peada, Penda's son, came to Oswy's court asking for his daughter in marriage he refused, though the would-be son-in-law had been appointed a sub-king by his grim old father, who was not a man to be trifled with. "I cannot give you my child unless you accept the faith of Christ and baptism, you and the people under your rule."

Peada duly considered this hard condition, and it was a help to him, in so doing, that Oswy's son, and the husband of his sister, was also his private friend. What chiefly impressed him, in their frequent talks, was the promise of a heavenly kingdom, and the hope of a life to come.

At last the young man spoke out, a true son of Penda in the manly conviction with which he accepted Christ. "I will be a Christian, whether I have the maiden or not"; and he was baptized, and all who were with him. Then he

joyfully returned home, with four priests to convert his subjects.

Perhaps the son's boldness disarmed Penda; at any rate, he offered no opposition, though he remained himself a heathen to the day of his death. Meanwhile his contemptuous disgust was excited by the hypocrisy of many who had been baptized. "The mean wretches, who have put their faith in this new God, and then will not trouble themselves to obey Him."*

It is the one recorded speech of Penda, the hero of so many fights with the upholders of the Christ. Sincere himself in his unbelief, he could respect sincerity in others; and his hearty contempt for a faith without practice has a true ring about it, which makes us the more respect this valiant servant of the gods.

Meanwhile, Oswy was busy in another direction. Thirty-seven years had now passed since Mellitus had been driven from London and Essex. Sigebert, "the Good," who now reigned there, was his personal friend, and the great alternative was often discussed between them.

"Surely," said Oswy, "you must see that a god cannot be made of wood or stone. God is invisible and eternal, the Creator of heaven, and earth, and men. His eternal abode is not in base metal, which cannot last, but in heaven, where eternal rewards are in store for all who learn to do their Maker's will."

After talking the matter over with his friends, who had come with him to the north, Sigebert believed and advised them to do the same. They agreed, and were all baptized, as Penda and his company had been before them, by Finan-Aidan's successor at Lindisfarne.

Two priests went back with them to Essex, one of them,

* Bright, tr. 176. He gives 653 as the date for this and the subsequent mission to Essex.

Cedd, being recalled from Mercia; and his labours illustrate the difficulties of the mission-field amongst our forefathers. At first, Cedd's success was so marked, that on his return to the north, for a brief visit, Finan made him a bishop. He was not, however, able to place his see at London, and it was the foretaste of future trouble.

Cedd, desirous of keeping his converts firm in their new faith, had strictly forbidden any Christian to enter the house or eat bread with one of two brothers who refused to give up an unlawful marriage. This stern command was, however, broken by Sigebert himself.

The choice between Christ and Belial was at stake. Even the king felt this, and when he met Cedd, on his return from the forbidden house, he dismounted from his horse and besought his pardon. Cedd also alighted, and touching the prostrate king with the wand in his hand he cried: "I tell thee, that as thou hast not kept away from the house of that lost man, in that house thou shalt die."

And so it came to pass. Shortly afterwards his kinsman and host treacherously slew him, with the aid of his brother, and this was their reason for their unnatural crime.

"We hated him! He was always so ready to spare his enemies and to forgive, the moment that he was asked to do so, that it made us bitter against him."

Thus Sigebert, the "Too Good,"* became a virtual martyr, as well as a striking illustration of the tremendous nature of the struggle between faith and idolatry. Only in holiness of life could Christ's quarrel be maintained, and this was the one source of Cedd's influence for good.

Ethelwald, for instance, Oswin's successor in Deira, was,

* So Fuller, "Church History," ii. 81, playing on the title "the Good," by which this king is usually distinguished from others of the same name. See Bright, 176.

like his uncle Oswy, no saint; but he could appreciate goodness in others, and Cedd's holy life made a deep impression upon him. He offered him land on which to build a monastery, where he might come to pray and hear the word, and in due time be buried; for he sincerely believed that he would be greatly helped by the daily prayers of those who would serve the Lord in that place.

Cedd's choice of a site was worthy of the man. The monastery was built in no lovely valley, but in the wildest spot which could be found among the mountains, more fit for the dens of robbers and the lairs of wild beasts than dwellings of men.

In that monastery of Lastingham* Cedd died of the plague many years after, A.D. 664, and his austere holiness bore its fruit even in death. As far as their rude minds could receive it, he made the swarms of monks, at the two centres† from which he chiefly worked his diocese, keep their monastic discipline. Yet, though he seems to have met with difficulties in enforcing his authority, thirty of these monks when they heard of this death exclaimed: "Let us go and live by the body of our father, if God will; or, if we die, let us be buried with him."

The plague was still rife when they arrived at Lastingham from Essex, and they all died of it save one little boy, whose life was spared in answer to the prayers of his father. Not being baptized in infancy, he sought its grace in after years, and in due time became a priest, his ministry being much blessed to the brethren and the Church.

Thus Cedd's virtues survived him. He belonged, indeed,

* Near Whitby, Plummer, ii. 180.

† Ythancæstre, which "has been placed near Bradwell-on-the-Sea," and Tilaburg, i.e., Tilbury, "familiarily associated with the Spanish Armada." Besides the monasteries, at these two centres, Cedd built churches at various places, and ordained priests and deacons to assist him in the word of faith and the ministry of baptizing. Bede, iii. 22; Bright, 178.

to a remarkable family in this respect. Of his three brothers, Chad, who succeeded him in the rule of the monastery at Lastingham, also became a bishop; the remaining two being famous as priests. It was rare, even in that heroic age, to find four brothers so illustrious in the ministry or their holiness of life.

XVI.—DEATH OF PENDA

(Bede, iii. 7, 18, 21, 24)

The new mission in Essex, conducted by Bishop Cedd, has led us somewhat far afield. It was soon after his consecration that Penda's last battle was fought; and the war, before it ended, affected no less than three centres of Christianity. Its original cause was in Wessex. The royal convert of Birinus was succeeded by his son, Kenwalch, a violent headstrong man, who resisted the new faith with all his might. With an audacity which is astonishing to think of he went yet further, and put away his queen, the sister of Penda, who promptly resented the insult by driving him from his throne. As in the case of Edwin or of Oswald, adversity proved for him a blessing in disguise, for his exile was spent at the court of East Anglia, where he saw Christianity at its best in the pure and holy lives of Anna and his family;* and when he returned, after three years, to his kingdom, it was as a Christian.

He left, however, a fatal legacy behind him. To Penda, the friend of the man who had so deeply wronged his sister was as worthy of vengeance as the original offender; and Anna paid for his zeal for the faith with his life, when "he fell like a sheep before the wolf, and hardly a man was left to tell the tale."†

Once more upon the war-path, Penda lent a ready ear to the suggestion of Anna's brother, whom he had made his vassal, that he should carry the campaign to the north; and with a huge host, which seemed to defy defeat, he swept down upon Northumbria.

* See Supplement.

† Hen. Hunt, ii. 33, and Bede.

Oswy was in despair; all his efforts for peace were unavailing. Nothing would soften Penda's heart, not even the offer of Oswy's royal ornaments, and gifts greater than could be believed. "I will cut off his race from the least to the greatest," cried the grim old heathen; for he was sure of his prey, and counted upon the victory as already won.

Oswy's fears drove him to his religion. "If the pagan will not accept our gifts, let us offer them to Him who will, the Lord our God"; and he sealed his words with a solemn vow: "If victory awaits me, I will give my daughter to the Lord, and found twelve monasteries and endow them with land." Thus, relying on Christ as their leader, Oswy, with his son Alchfrid, awaited the enemy.

To add to his difficulties, Ethelwald of Deira, Oswald's unworthy son, basely led on the foe against his uncle; but his treachery failed him at the point of fighting against his country, and he withdrew from the battle itself.

Penda had, apparently, no further need of his services. His army, three times as large as that of Oswy's, was led by the most noted captains of the day. But defeat and death awaited him when victory seemed most certain. His thirty captains, with Anna's brother, were almost all of them slain, and his own head cut off.

Thus perished, somewhat ignominiously, the terrible old man, whose name had long been one to chill the Christian's heart with fear. His final discomfiture was largely caused by the stream which gave the battle its name of Winwidfield. Swollen by the heavy rains, more men were drowned in its floods than fell by the sword. Hence the proverbial saying:*

"In Winwed stream was avenged the slaughter of Anna,
The slaughter of the Kings Sigebert and Egrie,
The slaughter of the Kings Oswald and Edwin."

* Hen. Hunt, ii. 34. The site of this battle is very uncertain; it was probably in Yorkshire.

These were the five Christian kings who fell before the might of Penda, "the Strenuous"; the first three belonged to East Anglia, the last two to Northumbria.

Oswy, after fulfilling his vow, lost no time in establishing his rule as a conqueror; retaining "Mercia proper"* in his own hands, but reinstating his son-in-law, Peada, in the position of sub-king south of the Trent, which he had held under Penda, his father.

With that praiseworthy zeal for Christ's Church which won for him the title of "Oswy, the Christian King," he also set in order the religious affairs of the conquered territory, selecting for it a bishop from the four priests whose success had been criticized by the heathen Penda.

Oswy's plans were, however, rudely interrupted by the murder of Peada, it is said by the treachery of his wife, Oswy's daughter. This revolting crime, the more unnatural because committed at the very time of the Easter festival, did not endear the conqueror to a people who keenly resented the loss of their independence; and, three years after the death of Penda, a revolt was led by three Mercian chiefs. They drove out the nobles of a king who was none of theirs, and, after the ancient fashion, they raised aloft upon their shields Wulfhere, a son of Penda, a youth whom they had kept in concealment till better times should come. Thus "they bravely regained at once their boundaries and their freedom, and so, being free, with a king of their own, they rejoiced to serve Christ, the true king."

Wulfhere was to reign gloriously for seventeen years, fulfilling all the hopes of the patriots who had placed him on the throne. They were Christians, and the Mercian bishopric was not disturbed, being destined, later on, to be adorned by the virtues of S. Chad. The battle of Winwid-field, A.D. 655, is, therefore, a landmark in the conversion

* Bright, 184.

of the English. With Penda fell heathenism as a power in the land, and since his day "no English ruling power has formally disowned the faith of Christ."*

A general survey of the missions at work at this date will not be amiss; the more especially since the network of the Gospel was nearly though not quite complete.

From Lindisfarne, the whole of the north and the interior of modern England was being gathered in, and from Canterbury, Kent, and East Anglia; while upon the south coast was the independent mission of Birinus in Wessex. But between Kent and Wessex was the one black blot of heathenism left in Sussex. It tells us of the blight which had fallen upon the original mission of S. Augustine; while a glance at the map shows how great was the work accomplished by S. Aidan and his successors.

Outside these missions to the English, the British Church must not be forgotten; with Wales as its stronghold, and an increasingly precarious footing in the West generally. But it still held rigidly aloof from the Saxon invader, even when professing the same faith and, as in the case of the missions from Lindisfarne, the same customs with themselves.

SUPPLEMENT: THE FAMILIES OF ANNA AND PENDA

(Bede, iii. 7, 8; iv. 19)

It is in connection with the conversion of Kenwalch, that we are told of Anna that "he was a good man and happy in a good and holy offspring." The piety of this truly religious king became, in fact, a tradition in his family. Monasteries at home in his day were but few, and Anna and other zealous Christians of that time were in the habit of sending their daughters abroad, to Brie and two other

* Bright, 184.

monasteries in France, there to be instructed and united to their Heavenly Bridegroom. Anna's step-daughter, Sæthryd, and his daughter, Ethelberga, though strangers, were each in turn made abbess of this monastery at Brie. Another daughter, Sexburga, who married Erconbert, King of Kent, died as abbess of Ely, which had been founded by her still more famous sister, Etheldreda. Ercongota, Sexburga's daughter, carried on the family tradition to yet another generation, as a nun at Brie, being described, in the vision which foretold to her her end, as "that golden coin which had come thither out of Kent."

This sanctity of Anna's house was only rivalled in the family of the mighty heathen who slew three of its kings. No less than five of Penda's children were "canonized as saints,"* and several of his grandchildren. His firm hold on the truth, as he believed it, thus blossomed forth in his descendants, though in a more worthy cause, much as Anna's piety became a tradition among his people. Nor need this surprise us. On one point, though differing in all else, the Christian king and his heathen conqueror were of the same mind. Both, to refer to the one recorded saying of the majestic Penda—both would regard with disgust the mean wretches, who put their trust in God, and then did not trouble themselves to obey Him.

* Bright, 175, 466.

XVII.—THE COUNCIL OF WHITBY

(Bede, ii. 9, 20; iii. 7, 15, 25, 26; v., 19. Eddi, Vita Wilfridi, 7)

As we have just seen, there were two centres in the English mission-field, Canterbury and Lindisfarne. They were divided upon the right date of Easter, and in this matter the independent mission of Birinus, upon the south coast, sided with Canterbury.

This unfortunate dispute had slept while Aidan lived. Even an archbishop Honorius and a bishop Felix were constrained to honour the man, while objecting most strongly to his opinions, his virtues were so conspicuous. But with his death it came to a head, and it was but natural that it should do so in Oswy's dominions.

Aidan was not the only apostle of the north; he had been preceded by Paulinus, who not only did an immense amount of work before his flight, but left behind him James the Deacon to carry it on. And in spite of the changes introduced, when York was abandoned and Lindisfarne founded, this true hero had plodded on teaching his converts the Catholic Easter, and also the system of music he had brought with him from Canterbury, in which his wonderful skill formed an added means of influence.*

At last, in his old age, his zeal was rewarded. Oswy's queen, Eanfled, came from Kent. She was that very daughter of the glorious Edwin who, as the first-fruits of Northumbria, had been baptized by Paulinus himself. Naturally the Canterbury use was her use, but the discomfort at Oswy's court was immense. It often meant two Easters

* He was the first promoter of the Gregorian chant in England (xxiv., note 1).

in one year; when the queen was keeping the day of Palms on the same day that the king had begun his Easter Alleluia, Only the poor, it has been quaintly pointed out, benefited by an arrangement which was the cause of endless confusion.*



FIG. 15.—WHITBY ABBEY RUINS.

At length the evil could no longer be endured, and a Council was called at Whitby to settle it, A.D. 664.

It was a great gathering; the king was present, so was his son Alchfrid, but like the queen opposed to his father. He had been won to the Catholic Easter by his friend Kenwalch.† To the headstrong character of this King of Wessex was also due the presence of another upholder of

* Fuller, "Church History," ii. 89.

† Eddi, Vita Wilfridi, 7.

the Catholic use. This was Agilbert, a Frenchman, who was staying in Wessex when Birinus died, and was induced to accept the vacant see. Later on Kenwalch, wearying of his foreign dialect, divided the diocese into two without consulting the bishop, so that he might have a countryman of his own, whose name was Wini, at Winchester, his capital.

It was very shameful treatment and Agilbert, highly indignant, withdrew altogether, leaving Dorchester deserted. His presence at the Council was of great importance, for he assisted the prince in pushing to the front the champion of their cause.

The splendid career of Wilfrid was to include the final conversion of the English. Originally a pupil at Lindisfarne, he obtained leave to pursue his studies abroad, and returned a devoted adherent of the Catholic Easter, looking upon his former teachers as ignorant islanders. Alchfrid took warmly to this enthusiast and became his patron. He made him abbot of his monastery at Ripon, driving out its original monks because they would not change their opinions at his bidding; and Agilbert did not hesitate to give his approval by ordaining Wilfrid a priest in another man's diocese.

Over this diocese presided Bishop Colman, the successor of Finan and Aidan at Lindisfarne, and a passionate believer in the traditions he represented. To Colman, Wilfrid was a pervert, trampling underfoot all he had once held dear; and the insolent tone this pervert adopted must have been exquisitely painful to him, and even to many of Wilfrid's supporters; for he actually dared to speak of the rustic simplicity of his former friends.

Into the arguments produced by these two champions we need not enter. It will be sufficient to notice, that while Colman relied on the authority of S. John and the practice of S. Columba, the revered founder of Iona, Wilfrid claimed

that of S. Peter, and asked if the customs of a few people in a corner of a remote island were to be preferred to those of the Church of Christ throughout the world; and he closed his speeches by thundering out the text: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven."

To the king, this use of the name of S. Peter was all-important, and he asked: "Is it true, Colman, that these words were spoken to Peter by our Lord?" Colman answered, "It is true."

"Can you show any such power given to your Columba?" He answered, "None."

"Do you both agree, then, that these words were spoken principally to Peter, and that to him the keys of the kingdom of heaven were given by our Lord?" Wilfrid and Colman replied, "Certainly." With a smile the king concluded: "And I say to you that this doorkeeper is one I do not choose to contradict, but, as far as in me lies, I will in all things obey his decrees, lest haply, when I come to the gates of the kingdom of heaven, he who is proved to hold the keys should deny me entrance."

This way of closing the dispute suggests that the king's mind was made up beforehand. At any rate, the decision was accepted as unanswerable, coming, as it did, from royal lips, and Bishop Cedd, who had acted as interpreter, joined the victors.

Not so Colman; he was prepared to resign rather than yield, but very beautiful was the way he did so. Lindisfarne must now fall into the hands of the enemy, but, with the king's cordial consent, he appointed as abbot, Eata, one of S. Aidan's twelve boys, who was already abbot of Melrose; that the monks, who did not feel equal to deserting their old home, might have at their head one whom they

already knew and loved. The see which Aidan had transferred to Lindisfarne now returned to its original home at York.

The bones of S. Aidan he ordered to be buried in the sacristy, except a few which he took with him. Then, with a long farewell, he, with those who agreed with him, vanished into exile.*

* The arguments at this Council may be safely omitted, for while Wilfrid had no difficulty in showing that Colman's use of the name of S. John was due to ignorance, his own use of the name of S. Peter, though it turned the scale in his favour, had no historical basis either.

The cycle, for instance, in use at Rome, at this date, for the calculation of the Paschal month had been adopted after many changes. So much so, that the native Churches of Britain and Ireland, cut off for a long period of time from the rest of the civilized world, were actually using one which Rome had abandoned!

But after the cycle had been determined, the limits in which Easter Day would fall, during the full moon, had to be fixed. On this point also the use of Rome had varied, but it is of more importance that here Colman and his party were clearly convicted of error.

They agreed, or in other words the native Churches they represented agreed, with the Council of Nicæa, A.D. 325, in celebrating Easter Day on the Sunday; but they departed from its decisions in fixing that Sunday from the fourteenth to the twentieth day of the moon, whereas the correct limits for a Catholic Easter were from the fifteenth to the twenty-first day of the moon.

It was this particular point which caused the confusion at the court of Northumbria, and produced the Council of Whitby: for when King Oswy celebrated Easter Day on the fourteenth day of the moon, Queen Eanfled had to wait till the following Sunday for the same festival.

In spite, therefore, of the rough-and-ready method adopted by the king, the best solution of the problem was reached at Whitby. It was better that the Catholic Easter should be adopted, even though the change involved a break with the past. Otherwise a cycle which had become out of date, and a system for determining the actual day which had been discredited by the first General Council, would have remained in use.

For a fuller discussion of this very thorny subject see the excursus upon it, Plummer, ii. 348; Bright, 79, 149, 150, 174, 202.

XVIII.—THE ABBESS HILDA

(Bede, iii. 26; iv. 23)

Imagination follows Colman in his dignified retreat, a grand but pathetic figure; but while it would be idle to deny that the Catholic Easter was an immense gain for the future of the infant Church, it is no less true that it would have been purchased at a heavy cost if his example had been largely followed.

Even the outward aspect of Lindisfarne when Colman left it showed plainly to the eye the lives of its inmates. Besides the wooden church, there were no buildings save those absolutely necessary for daily use. A few herds of cattle represented the wealth of its monks. They had no money, or if any came their way it was at once passed on to the poor. No provision, even, was made for the great and powerful. The king when he visited the place came, with five or six attendants, prepared to share the scanty fare of the monks, and to depart as soon as prayer in church was over.

For this reason, at that time the religious habit was in great veneration. When a priest or monk appeared on a mission tour, he was joyfully received by all, as God's servant. If any met him in the way, they ran to him and, kneeling, besought his blessing, and right gladly did they listen to the holy words which fell from his mouth.

On Sundays, the churches and monasteries were thronged with worshippers, who flocked together, by God's grace, not for the body's sake but to hear sermons. If a priest visited some lonely hamlet, all its people came together to hear the word of life. They all knew that he had come for the



FIG. 16.—THE ABBESS HILDA RECEIVING KING OSWY'S DAUGHTER.

good of souls, to preach, to baptize, and to visit the sick, and that nothing was further from his thoughts than what he could get out of them. Indeed, so free from the love of gain were these priests and monks, that it often became necessary for the State to compel them to accept lands and possessions on which to build monasteries.

Such splendid devotion would have been a heavy loss, if many had followed Colman's example. Happily it was not so, and one instance, among many, of those who complied with the decision of the Council was the head of the abbey at Whitby, where it had taken place.

The Abbess Hilda belonged in a sense to both schools of thought. Baptized by Paulinus, at the same time as her great-uncle King Edwin, her whole life had been spent under the guidance of Aidan; who both knew and loved her, and was her friend as well as her teacher.

Without as well as within the walls of the abbey her influence was felt, and when she was spoken of it was as "the Mother," so greatly was she loved and honoured by all men, besides by the monks and nuns under her rule.

Kings came to her for advice, and bishops relied on her for fit men to serve at the altar. So well trained were they in the reading of the Scriptures and all that belongs to holy things, that no less than five became bishops, all of them distinguished men.

A dream was held to have foretold her life of practical usefulness, as well as of fervent piety. Hilda's father was then in exile, where he was also poisoned. Now it seemed to Hilda's mother, filled with distress at his disappearance, that she found under her garment a most precious jewel, and as she surveyed it attentively, it cast such a dazzling light that all Britain was filled with its splendour. Thus was the mother consoled for the loss of her husband, by a

daughter whose life was a bright example not only to herself but to all who desired to live well.

As so often happens, it was by the cross of suffering that the beauty of Hilda's life was made perfect. She who had been so active in good works lingered for the last six years upon the bed of sickness, never ceasing to give thanks to the Most High in her increasing weakness. It was by example as well as by precept, that she taught her flock to use their health in God's service, and always to return thanks to Him in adversity or infirmities. So the end came. It was about cock-crowing when she sent for the "viaticum of the most Holy Communion," as the last Communion of the dying was called, and received it with the handmaids of Christ, beseeching them with her latest breath to live at peace among themselves and with all men; and while uttering these words she looked cheerfully on death, or rather, if I may use the Lord's words, "passed from death unto life."

Thirteen miles away was another house, founded that very year, under the "Mother's" rule. There was there a nun, of some thirty years' standing, who that night seemed to hear the bell ring which called to prayer, and a strong light pour in from above, and in that light, in her dream, she saw Hilda's soul, attended by angels, borne to heaven. The rest of the night was spent in saying prayers and psalms for the soul of the "Mother," and when, in the early morning, brothers came with the sad news from Whitby, they said, "We knew it already," and it was found that the hour of the nun's dream was that of Hilda's death.

As the Abbess Hilda lived till 680, and the Council of Whitby took place in 664, the days of S. Aidan, in her person alone, were treasured for many years as a great ideal.

XIX.—CÆDMON, HERDSMAN AND POET

(Bede, iv. 24)

With the life of S. Hilda will always be associated that of Cædmon, the father of English poetry. He was but a herdsman of advanced years when he was first brought under the notice of "the Mother"; and that Cædmon was a poet was the last thing that either he or his fellows had ever imagined.

Indeed, there was the clearest proof to the contrary. At the rough entertainments of the peasantry, when the tedium of the long winter evenings was beguiled by beer and song, the word would be given that each in turn should sing. But when Cædmon saw the harp coming in his direction, for shame he rose from table and went home.

Mortified by his failure on one occasion, he took refuge in the stable, where it fell to him to take care of the horses that night, and there he went to sleep. But in his sleep a person appeared to him, and calling him by name said: "Cædmon, sing me something."

"I don't know how to sing. That was why I left the party and came here, because I cannot sing."

"However, you have got to sing to me."

"What must I sing?"

"Sing of the creation."

Forthwith, at this command, he began to sing verses in praise of God the Maker:

"Now should we praise the Guardian of the heaven realm,
The Maker's might and His mind thought,
Works of the glorious Father, as He of each wonder,
Eternal Lord, created the beginning.



FIG. 17.—“CÆDMON, SING ME SOMETHING.”

He erst shaped for children of men
Heaven as a roof, the holy Creator:
Then the middle world did mankind's Guardian,
Eternal Lord, afterwards create,
Earth for men, Lord Almighty."*

On waking, he remembered all that he had sung while sleeping, and added to it yet more verses. The next day, coming to the bailiff, under whom he worked, he told him what a gift he had received, and was straightway conducted to the abbess, who commanded him, in the presence of many learned men, to tell his dream and sing his song; and it seemed to all that heavenly grace had been given him of the Lord.

A piece of sacred history or doctrine was next described to Cædmon the herdsman, that he, if he could, might turn it into the melody of song. He then went away, and the next day returned with his poem.

The abbess, convinced by this that the grace of God was in this man, bade him become a monk; and, after he had been solemnly received into the monastery, she had him taught the story of the Scriptures. And Cædmon, thinking it over like a clean animal ruminating, turned it all into the sweetest verse.

Then his teachers became his hearers, while he sang to them of the creation of the world, the origin of mankind, the whole history of Genesis, the Exodus, the entrance into Canaan, and other events of Scripture history; the Incarnation, Passion, Resurrection, Ascension, the coming of the Holy Spirit, the preaching of the Apostles. Many a poem, also, did he make about the awful future judgment, the terrible punishment in hell, the sweetness of the heavenly kingdom, the judgment and the benefits of God; in all

* Version of "the original Northumbrian text," Bright, 285. For its history and the text itself see also Plummer, ii. 251, 252. Bede, unfortunately only gives a Latin translation in his "History."

which his aim was to draw men away from the love of wickedness, and to stir them up to the love and diligent practice of well-doing. For he was a man very religious, and humbly obedient to the discipline of the rules; but against those who chose to do ill he burnt with the fiercest zeal.

Many after him, of the English race, tried to imitate him, but none could approach him, for his gift was by the grace of God. But one thing was peculiar about it, Cædmon the poet, like Cædmon the herdsman, was utterly out of place at a beer party. To the last, he could compose nothing frivolous or vain, but only religious songs.

His life of piety was closed by a beautiful end. Fourteen days before his death his bodily powers began to fail, but so slowly that he could talk and get out of doors the whole time. At last, he desired to be taken to the out-building set apart for the sick and dying; and, greatly wondering, the man who looked after him did as he requested.

After some pleasant talk with the other patients, till after midnight, he asked:

“Have you the Eucharist within?”

Startled, they answered: “What need have you of the Eucharist? You have not got to die just yet, you talk too cheerily for that.”

“However,” he replied, “bring me the Eucharist.”

When it was in his hand, he asked whether they all felt kindly towards him. “Surely,” they said, “and we pray you to feel so towards us.”

“Dear children,” was his sweet answer, “I feel kindly towards all God’s servants.”

Thus strengthened with the heavenly viaticum, he asked how soon the brethren would be awakened for the next service before dawn.*

* See xii. and note 2. For the meaning of “viaticum” see last chapter.

“It will not be long,” they said. “Good! then let us wait that hour.” Signing himself with the cross, he laid his head on the pillow and fell asleep, and so in silence passed away.

Such was the end of this herdsman poet of Whitby. With a simple and pure mind he had served God, and by a quiet death he departed to His presence; his last word and act showing a foreknowledge of his death, and harmonizing with all that he had sung in praise of the Creator.

SUPPLEMENT : COLDINGHAM ABBEY

(Bede, iv. 25)

It must not be supposed that all monasteries were as successful as that at Whitby, under the rule of S. Hilda. There was in those days another royal foundation, for monks as well as nuns, though under an abbess, at Coldingham near Berwick. S. Ebba, whose name is still preserved in “S. Abb’s Head,”* was the “half-sister of Oswy and Oswald”;† no breath of scandal had ever sullied the fair fame of her holy life, but it was otherwise with those under her rule.

One of the monks who was expiating the guilt of his youth by the most severe discipline, never taking food or drink save on Sundays and Thursdays, was one day returning to the convent with one of the brothers, and as they beheld its lofty buildings from afar he burst into tears, foretelling its destruction, by fire. The abbess and mother of the congregation, being informed, questioned the monk about it; and the tale she heard must have filled her pious soul with dismay.

While keeping watch by night, a person whose face was unknown to him stood by this monk, and bade him be of

* Plummer, ii. 236.

† Bright, 193. See Bede, iv. 19.

good cheer. "You do well," he told him, "to spend this night not in sleep but in prayer. This very few do, for I have visited every room in turn and found none, save yourself, busy about his soul. If any of the men and women are awake, it is to commit sin; and the cells, intended for prayer or reading, are used for eating, drinking, and idle talk. Even the virgins dedicated to God, despising their profession, devote their spare time to weaving fine garments; for which cause this place will be destroyed by fire."

"But why," asked the abbess, "did you not tell me all this before?" "It was out of respect, and to spare you sorrow, and it is a consolation to know that these things will not happen in your days."

The vision became known, and for a short time better order was kept, but after the death of S. Ebba the evils, so solemnly denounced, broke out with fresh virulence. At last the judgment fell, and while they said, "Peace and safety," the place was burnt down by carelessness. But those who knew the evil lives of its inmates, especially of those in authority, could not but feel that its fate was due to the vengeance of heaven.

PART III.—ORGANIZATION

(a) FIRST STEPS

XX.—THE COMING OF THEODORE

(Bede, iii. 23, 27, 29, 30; iv. 1, 2; v. 8)

In the same year, 664, that the Council of Whitby took place there was an eclipse of the sun. The date was further fixed in men's minds by a great plague which destroyed far and wide; and, as we have seen, Cedd died of it, far away from his diocese of Essex. Knowing the previous history of Essex, it is not surprising that the appearance of this dreadful scourge produced a second apostasy. Once more the people restored the temples with their idols, as if they might by these means escape the mortality. Cedd's work, however, was not like that of Mellitus, wholly in vain. Of the two Kings of Essex one, with his people, remained firm in the faith he had received with great devotion. Sebbi's admirable constancy received the full support of his overlord, Wulfhere of Mercia, who, understanding that the Christian religion was partly profaned in those parts, sent his bishop to the rescue. The mission was so successful that, "either forsaking or destroying the temples and altars they had made, they reopened the churches, and rejoiced once more to confess the name of Christ which they had denied; preferring to die in the faith of the resurrection in Him, than to live amidst idols in the filth of unbelief."*

Good thus came out of evil from the ravages of the plague

* For King Sebbi's further history see Supplement.

in a district which had never been a stronghold of the faith. Though the progress of the pestilence was from south to north, let us now turn to Kent, where it affected the fortunes of the infant Church on a yet larger scale; for there Erconbert died of it after a long reign as a Christian king, and also Deusdedit, the first native archbishop.

This vacancy in the see of Canterbury, in the same year that the Catholic Easter had been agreed upon at Whitby, was an event of the very first importance. To Oswy, as overlord, consulting with the new King of Kent for the welfare of the "Church of the English," one doctrine implied one head. So fully did the two kings understand the nature of the step they were taking, that it was with the express "choice and consent of the Holy Church of the English race" that Wighard, one of the priests of the late archbishop, was sent to Rome itself to be ordained; "that, having received the grade of an archbishop, he might ordain Catholic prelates for the churches of the English throughout all Britain."

How this unanimous "choice and consent" was arrived at is not stated; but there can be no doubt that it was decided that the various missions to the Anglo-Saxon race should be united under one head in the see of Canterbury, the first to be founded amongst the heathen English. Thus the Chair of S. Augustine was to be restored to the position which had been wellnigh lost by his successors, owing to the more fervent zeal of the disciples of S. Aidan.

Wighard, however, did not carry out the great design, for he was cut off by the pestilence soon after his arrival at Rome. There is a difficulty* about what actually happened in consequence; but it is certain that the Pope himself undertook to supply his place. It was no light

* See Bright, 226-228; Plummer, ii. 200, 201 on the Pope's letter to Oswy. Bede, iii. 29.

task. Far from being the important person he has now become in a great empire, the Pope's nominee would be a mere missionary archbishop to a barbarian people beyond the sea. In fact, he was obliged to tell Oswy, as politely as he could, that no one cared for the post whom he would wish to have.

It was offered to Hadrian, a learned African; but he declined, naming someone else. Soon it came to Hadrian again, but though pressed he still refused. "If I had time," he said, "I might yet find a suitable person." At last, with his aid, the great choice was made.

Theodore was a Greek by race, born like S. Paul at Tarsus, sixty-six years of age, and learned in all the literature of his day, sacred and profane, as well as in Greek and Latin. A simple monk, he was hastily ordained sub-deacon; and then there was a pause. As a Greek monk he used the tonsure of S. Paul, after the custom of the East, in which the head was shaved entirely;* and there was a delay of four months, that his hair might grow till it could be shorn into the shape of a crown, the tonsure in use at Rome. Then he was consecrated by the Pope himself. A.D. 668; but only on the express condition that Hadrian should accompany him to England. One reason for this was that Hadrian had already twice travelled through France, and also could provide an escort; but there was another of yet greater weight. The want of a correct appearance was not the only difficulty about the new archbishop. The East was at that time a hotbed of heresy, and, though there was no reason to suspect that Theodore was in any way unsound, it was thought to be as well to make sure that "he would not introduce anything contrary to the true faith, *after the custom of the Greeks*, into the Church over which he was to preside."

* See Bright, 230 note.

Hadrian, therefore, went with Theodore to England. His motives in declining the chief post for himself were thus placed beyond suspicion. But what about the archbishop? No one could have started with less hope of success than this Greek, who needed someone to keep him straight in more ways than one. Yet Theodore, as his name implies, was to prove a true "Gift of God" to the English race, and to complete the work of S. Augustine and S. Aidan, as the third founder of the Church of England.

It was in the second year after his consecration that Theodore arrived at his church at Canterbury, and he held the same for no less than twenty-one years. Attended and assisted by Hadrian, Theodore taught the right rule of life, and the Catholic Easter. Willingly received everywhere, he was the first archbishop accepted by "the whole Church of the English"; and by his wonderful skill as a ruler of men he brought them more spiritual benefit than they had ever before received.

England has become in our day the centre of the great and world-wide British empire. The civilized natives of India and the savage tribes of Africa are alike indebted for peace and prosperity to the British rule. It is well, therefore, for us to remember that it was to the barbarous and but lately heathen English that Theodore, the Asiatic by birth, and Hadrian the African came, that they might set our feet firm upon the path which has led to our great inheritance.

SUPPLEMENT: KING SEBBI

(Bede, iv. 11)

The piety of King Sebbi which so largely produced the third mission to Essex had a no less important effect upon his personal history, preferring as he did a private and monastic life to all the wealth and honours of his kingdom;

insomuch that it was said of him that he was more fit to be a bishop than a king. Long did he meditate the step of resigning his crown for the cloister, but his wife refused to be separated from him; and he had reigned for thirty years when a violent attack of illness, which proved the foretaste of death itself, enabled him to urge with success that they should together devote themselves to God's service, since they could no longer enjoy or rather serve the world. Her reluctant consent thus gained, he went to the then Bishop of London, and with his blessing received the religious habit; and at the same time he placed in the bishop's hands a large sum of money for the poor, reserving nothing for himself, for he desired to remain poor in spirit for the sake of the kingdom of heaven.

This royal monk did not, however, forget that once he had reigned upon a throne. His sickness increased, and fearing lest in the hour of death he might say or do something unworthy of his former dignity, he earnestly requested that none should be present at his end save the bishop alone, and two of his attendants. The bishop willingly consented, but the precaution proved needless, for it was revealed to the old man in a dream that he would have a peaceful departure. Three days afterwards he passed away, as if gently falling asleep, and was buried in S. Paul's Cathedral, where his tomb was shown "until the great fire of 1666."*

* Plummer, ii. 220.

XXI.—THEODORE AND CHAD

(Bede, iii. 28; iv. 2, 3; v. 19. Eddi, Vita Wilfridi, 14, 15)

By the time that Theodore had well begun his tour throughout the missions to the English there were but three bishops in England: Wini of Winchester, and also Wilfrid and Chad, who claimed the same see in the north.*

This difficulty was indirectly caused by the Council of Whitby. Wilfrid was rewarded for his immense services by a bishopric; and this hero of right views, careful of any slur which might be cast upon his orders, arranged to go abroad for his consecration. So congenial was the society in which Wilfrid found himself, that he lingered on and on; till his return was given up as hopeless, and another chosen to fill his place.

This was Chad, who had succeeded his brother Cedd at Lastingham. He was consecrated as Bishop of York, the archbishop being dead at Canterbury, by the Bishop of Winchester, assisted by two British bishops, who of course would uphold the views rejected at Whitby.

Chad's consecration, therefore, had just that kind of flaw which Wilfrid had been so careful to avoid; but heedless of such things he set to work. His humility, uprightness of life, and attention to reading were conspicuous, nor did his studies prevent more active labours. In towns, country districts, cottages, townships, and forts, he preached

* *I.e.*, York. This was the ultimate result of the series of complications which followed Colman's retirement. The two chief authorities differ completely as to what really happened. Eddi, 11, 14, 15; Bede, iii. 26, 27, 28; iv. 2; v. 19. It would be out of place here to do more than allude to the vast amount of erudition displayed in the attempt to get at the truth. See Browne, "Theodore and Wilfrith," lect. ii.; Plummer on Bede's text as above; Bright, 218.

the Gospel; not on horseback, but after the manner of the Apostles, on foot. For he was one of the pupils of Aidan, and took care to train his hearers after his example and that of his brother Cedd.

By the time, therefore, Wilfrid at last returned his place was filled up by one who had gained golden opinions everywhere, and he quietly retired to his monastery at Ripon, leaving Chad in possession.

Such, then, was the situation when Theodore arrived in the north, after ordaining bishops in Kent and East Anglia, and his manner of dealing with it was characteristic of the new archbishop.

His rigid mind at once seized upon the flaw in Chad's orders. "You have not been duly consecrated," he told him in the plainest terms.

With a humble voice Chad replied, "If you know that I have not duly received the office of a bishop I willingly retire from it. Indeed, I never thought myself worthy of it; but for obedience's sake, when commanded to undertake it, I consented, though unworthy."

This meek reply much pleased Theodore. "No, you ought not to resign the office of a bishop," was his decision; and "he himself completed his consecration afresh in the Catholic manner."*

But Chad was not satisfied. Conscious apparently that there was a further difficulty in his position, besides the flaw in his orders, he retired to Lastingham, leaving Wilfrid his rival in possession of the see.

Happily a better way out of the tangle was found. Wulfhere of Mercia at this time applied for a bishop, and Theodore at once asked Oswy for Chad. But this was not all. This humble-minded bishop had deeply impressed

* Eddi's account in this and other particulars is different from that of Bede. He states that Chad was reordained "through all the ecclesiastical grades." See Bright, 237, 238, and Note C; Plummer, ii. 207.



FIG. 18.—ARCHBISHOP THEODORE PLACING BISHOP CHAD ON HORSEBACK.

Theodore, and he had a piece of advice to give him which shows us the great archbishop at his best. He told Chad that he must ride whenever the long distances required it; and when he hesitated, mindful no doubt of Aidan's example, Theodore, masterful but kindly, settled the question by himself placing the bishop on horseback, because he saw that Chad was a holy man.

Chad's new see was fixed as Lichfield, and since his further career was but short, the account of it may as well be completed here. His humility of mind was still conspicuous; and a striking instance of it was carefully treasured by one who had been brought up at his monastery. If, while he was reading, the wind rose high, he implored God's pity upon mankind. If it increased he would close his book, and prostrate himself in prayer. If it rose to a storm, with thunder and lightning, he would repair to the church, and give himself with a fixed mind to prayer and the repeating of psalms till it was over; and when questioned about it he would quote the Psalmist, "The Lord thundered out of heaven," etc., and add, "Thus does He move men's minds to fear, that He may recall to their memory the future judgment, when He will judge the quick and the dead. It becomes us to receive the heavenly warning with fear and love."

Nor was it wonderful that he should joyfully behold the day of his death, or rather the day of the Lord, seeing that he had so carefully prepared for it, and this is the account of it.

Outside the bishop's house, hard by the church, where he was wont to read and pray with seven or eight brethren, might be seen a monk who was originally the steward of Queen Etheldreda, and ruler of her household. But Owin had renounced the world; and attired in a simple dress, with axe and hatchet in hand, had presented himself to

Chad at Lavingham, and followed him to Lichfield. Study was not in his line, so he spent his time in field work; and while the bishop and the brethren were reading within he was attending to odd jobs outside.

One day, while thus at work, he heard for the space of half an hour the sound of angels singing over the oratory where the bishop was alone at prayer; and while Owin was lost in wonder at the vision the bishop opened the window of his oratory, and clapping his hands together, commanded him to enter.

He was told to fetch the seven brethren from the church, and to come with them; and when they were all around him the bishop told them that his time was at hand. "That lovable guest who used to visit our brethren," for so he described the angel of death, "has come to me to-day. Go back to the church," he added, "and bid the brethren commend to the Lord my departure, and also remember to prepare for their own, of which the hour is uncertain."

When the brethren had departed in great sorrow, with the bishop's blessing, Owin returned alone, and fell at the bishop's feet.

"I beseech thee, my father, let me ask you a question."

"Ask what you will."

"I beseech thee, tell me what was that song of joy I heard."

And Chad, after securing Owin's silence till his death had taken place, explained, "They were angelic spirits who came to call me to the heavenly rewards I was ever loving and desiring; and after seven days they have promised they will return and take me with them."

And so it happened. He was seized with weakness, and grew weaker daily; and on the seventh day, fortified by the reception of the Body and Blood of the Lord, he passed away.



FIG. 19.—OWIN RECEIVED AT LASTINGHAM.

That miracles were wrought at his tomb is not surprising. It was covered by a wooden monument made in the form of a little house with a hole in the wall; through which those who visited the place in devotion were wont to put in their hand and take out some of the dust to mix with water, and give to sick men and beasts to drink.

XXII.—THE COUNCIL OF HERTFORD

(Bede, iii. 7; iv. 5, 6)

Some two years after the consecration of Theodore, Oswy, the King of Northumbria, fell sick and died in the fifty-eighth year of his age. The one crime of his life had been fully atoned for by his services to religion. If he did not leave a name like that of the saintly Oswald his brother, he did more than anyone else to extend the borders of Christ's Church in England. Nor was this all. By the Council of Whitby, which removed the one serious difference between Canterbury and Lindisfarne, and still more by the deliberate choice of one archbishop for the whole land, he virtually restored the infant Church to the lines on which it had been originally started by S. Augustine, in the mission sent forth by Pope Gregory.

This nursing father of the Church did not, however, live to see how great was the success of the archbishop, whose appointment he had so largely promoted. Theodore was not content with removing abuses, and consecrating or appointing bishops to all sees throughout all England except London. A true statesman, he knew the value of a visible and tangible setting forth of the unity he represented, and for this purpose he summoned a Council for the whole Church at Hertford in 673.

At this Council the Church of England may be said to have definitely sprung to life,* and it is a landmark in the making of England no less than of England's Church. For this, "the first of all national gatherings," was the

* Some might prefer to place this at the selection of Wighard, by the express choice and consent of the "Church of the English."

forerunner of the High Court of Parliament, with all that it means to the English-speaking race throughout the world. "Theodore may thus far take no mean place among the men who helped to make England."* Every detail, therefore, belonging to this assembly becomes of unique interest to all true lovers of their Church and country.

It was a "Council of Bishops," but this was according to precedent, a point on which an archbishop who was a Greek by race, and sent from Rome to preside over a mission Church in England, was well qualified to decide. It was, however, also according to precedent that many Church teachers, who loved and knew the canonical statutes of the fathers, should also be present to give their advice, though not to vote.

The list of prelates was as follows: Theodore, the unworldly Bishop of Canterbury, sent by the Apostolic See; Bisi, Bishop of the East Angles, the proper representative of Wilfrid who was unable to attend in person; Putta, Bishop of Rochester; Lothere, Bishop of the West Saxons; and Winfrid, the successor of S. Chad, Bishop of the Mercians.

Cedd's mission to the East Saxons was unrepresented. Wini, his successor, of whom we have already heard as the Bishop of Winchester, after being driven out of Wessex by Kenwalch, like Agilbert before him, had obtained the see of London by paying money for it. The first instance of a black sheep in the highest order of the clergy—it was for this reason, apparently, that he was passed over. He was, however, soon succeeded in his diocese by Erkenwald, a true saint, whose name was long held in grateful remembrance.†

The Council opened, after all had sat down in order, with a speech from Theodore on the preservation of charity,

* Bright, whose account of the Council itself is most interesting, 249-258.

† For a further account of S. Erkenwald see Supplement.

and of the unity of the Church. He then asked each in turn: "Do you agree to keep those things which have been canonically decreed of old by the fathers?" To which they replied: "It pleases us well. We will do so most willingly, with all our hearts."

It was the answer Theodore expected. He next produced a book of canons gathered from the whole of Christendom, together with ten articles which he had previously marked as specially important, and which may be thus summarized.

1. That Easter Day be kept on the Sunday after the fourteenth moon of the first month.

2. That no bishop invade another man's diocese.

3. That monasteries be exempt from episcopal control.

4. That monks go not from place to place without leave.

5. That no clergyman leave the diocese to which he belongs without letters of commendation from his bishop.

6. That bishops and clergy, when travelling, refrain from using their priestly functions, except with the leave of the bishop in whose diocese they find themselves.

7. That a synod be held twice a year.

8. That no bishop put himself before another, but that all observe the time and order of their consecration.

9. That the number of bishops be increased with the number of the faithful.

10. That none but lawful marriages be allowed.

These articles were all agreed to and confirmed by each bishop signing them with his own hand, after the business-like archbishop had dictated them to "Titullus our scribe," that they might be preserved in writing.

The document tells us of an archbishop, indeed, in its every line, but even a Theodore was compelled to acknowledge one defeat. To the ninth article the significant note was added, "But concerning this at present we are silent."

On this point, then, the archbishop did not carry his audience with him, but he was not the man to be kept back from anything on which he had set his heart. When Bisi shortly afterwards retired through ill-health he promptly divided his see into two parts,* to be reunited in the modern see of Norwich.†

The deposition of Winfrid, bishop of the Mercians, for some unnamed disobedience, has been supposed to indicate resistance in his case to the same process of division in the diocese he had received intact from S. Chad. At any rate, it tells us of the masterful character of the archbishop. But he was to meet with an opponent worthy of his steel. This was Wilfrid, who had not been present at the Council, and it is difficult to believe that his absence was wholly accidental, in view of the strife which took place between the two most eminent men of their generation. As the active opposition to the archbishop's policy of creating smaller sees was wholly due to Wilfrid, it will be well to pause so as to set forth his career in more detail where it has not already been dwelt upon. In doing so we shall reach in due course the chain of events, which not only resulted in the triumph of Theodore's schemes, but also made the proud prelate of the north an apostle to the heathen English upon the south coast.

SUPPLEMENT. S. ERKENWALD

(Bede, iv. 6, 7, 8)

The horse litter, in which this saintly bishop was wont to be carried about his diocese when infirm, was long preserved as a sovereign cure for fevers and other complaints: the patients being placed in the litter itself, or close beside

* The two sees were Dunwich and Elmham, Malmesbury, G.P., ii. 74.

† Recently a large portion of this see has been incorporated in the new see of S. Edmundsbury and Ipswich.

it. Yet another method was to take chips from the wonder-working litter to those who could not be brought to it. Let us not despise the primitive methods of the healing art in those early days, revealed in this and similar stories. They had a lovely origin in that zeal for souls which endeared the bishop to his people. And it would seem that London, which drove out Mellitus, and apparently rejected Cedd the saint, though it accepted Wini, the black sheep, was made firm for Christ by the piety of S. Erkenwald.

Before he became a bishop he had founded two monasteries, one for himself at Chertsey, and a second at Barking for his sister Ethelburga. Several marvellous stories are told us of the latter.

The abbess had been consulting the nuns about a place for their burial-ground, for fear lest the plague, when it came, should find them without one. There had been much perplexity in the matter, when one night, when the *Matin* Psalms before daybreak in the chapel were ended, and the nuns had gone to sing the praises of the Lord by the tombs of the brothers, so vivid was the light which shone down, and finally moved to the south side of the monastery, and there remained for some time, that their song broke off in alarm. But soon they realized, with delight, that the spot so long discussed had been settled for them. Nor was this vision granted only to the *nuns*. One of the senior monks, who was in *their* chapel with another younger brother, related in the morning that the rays which came through the cracks in its doors and windows exceeded the daylight itself.

When the plague, thus duly provided for, broke out, a little boy of three died of it, crying with his latest breath, "Eadgith, Eadgith, Eadgith"; and the same day the virgin named followed him to the heavenly kingdom. It was on account of his tender age that Esica, as the boy was

called, had pursued his studies, young as he was, on the nuns' side of the monastery.

The early service while it was yet dark; the cracks in the doors and windows of the monks' chapel, no doubt built of wood; the double establishment at Barking as at Whitby which the senior monk's testimony implies; the little boy, already being taught his letters by the nuns when he died of the dreaded plague; the burial-ground, wondrously placed on the south side of the monastery, which is to this day the part of God's acre most esteemed—make a charming peep into the monastic life of the period.

(b) NORTHUMBRIA

XXIII.—THE CAREER OF WILFRID*

(Bede, iv. 2; v. 19. Eddi, 2-6, 12-14)

It was in his fourteenth year that Wilfrid, with his father's blessing, determined to give himself to the monastic life; the boy's resolve being caused by an unhappy home, due to an unkind stepmother. Under the patronage of Queen Eanfled he entered the monastery at Lindisfarne; where he soon won the affection of his superiors, who included S. Aidan, and also his equals. His diligence, indeed, was most marked; for, though not yet a monk, he soon learnt the Psalms by rote, and had even read some books, a great feat in those days.

His zeal in his studies would give weight to his next resolve. Feeling that the teaching to be had at Lindisfarne "was not perfect," he asked leave to go to Rome to see for himself what rites were in use at the Apostolic See. Far from resenting the implied slur, the brethren applauded his design. The queen also approved of his wish to visit the threshold of the Apostles, and sent him to Kent to her cousin King Erconbert, with a request that he would see to the long journey which lay before Wilfrid. It was characteristic of our hero, who was never idle at any time, that he spent his time, during the delay which ensued, in learning all he could at the headquarters of the Roman mission to the English.

* The account of Wilfrid which follows is based upon Bede, enlarged, where indicated in the heading of each chapter, from the "Life of Wilfrid," by Eddi, his choirmaster. On Bede's reticence on the crucial stage of Wilfrid's career see Bright, 291.

At last a companion was found for him in Benedict Biscop, who was destined to be almost as remarkable as himself. The two, however, soon parted at Lyons, where, if its archbishop had had his way, Wilfrid would have stayed altogether, as his adopted son married to his niece, with a magnificent career provided for him. It was no wonder that the archbishop was attracted to him, for this is the "brilliant" picture given to us of Wilfrid at this time. He was "pleasant in address to all, sagacious in mind, strong in body, swift of foot, ready for every good work, with a face that in its unclouded cheerfulness betokened a blessed mind."* Wilfrid, however, was proof against temptation, and followed Benedict at last to Rome, after the archbishop had made him promise that he would visit Lyons on his way back.

Once at Rome, Wilfrid hastened to carry out the desire which had won for him the assistance of Queen Eanfled; visiting the holy places daily for many months, in prayer, especially S. Andrews, from whence S. Augustine had set forth on his mission to the English. Kneeling before the altar, on which was placed a copy of the four Gospels, Wilfrid prayed the Apostle that through his intercession the Lord would grant to him the skill to read, and the eloquence to teach the Gospels among the Gentiles.

His piety soon won for him another of the many friends he made at every turn in Archdeacon Boniface, a counsellor of the Pope; who taught him the four Gospels in order, and the true calculation of Easter, and many other Church rules which he could not acquire in his own country; so that he pursued the studies which he had proposed to himself, with the approval of the brethren at Lindisfarne, under the best of teachers. The archdeacon's interest also procured for Wilfrid the crown of his desires; for before

* Bright, tr. 197.

Wilfrid left Rome he was presented to the Pope, who laid his hand upon his head, and blessed him with prayer.

Wilfrid, feeling no doubt that his visit to Rome had succeeded beyond his utmost hope, returned to Lyons. There he spent three years with the archbishop, who made him a monk with the correct Roman tonsure, and who would have appointed him his heir but for his own violent death. Wilfrid attended him at his execution, being indeed desirous to share his fate, though the archbishop opposed it. "Who is that handsome young fellow, getting ready to die?" it was asked. "He is of the English race from Britain across the sea." "Leave him alone then." Thus strangely spared, Wilfrid returned to England.

His friendship with Alchfrid, Oswy's son, who made him abbot of Ripon, and his triumph at Whitby, which won for him a bishopric, have already been told; and how he went abroad that his consecration might be completely valid. The ceremony took place in France with great magnificence, eleven bishops besides Agilbert, who had ordained him priest, taking part in it. And after they had ordained him publicly the bishops, as their custom was, bore him aloft upon a golden chair into the oratory, singing hymns and canticles in choir. All this would be after Wilfrid's own heart, and, as we have seen, he stayed so long in such delightful society that he found Chad at York on his return.

His second visit abroad, like his first, ended in an adventure. The ship which bore him home was driven by the gale upon the coasts of heathen Sussex, and the barbarians rushed down to seize it and divide the spoil, on the principle, "All that the sea casts up is ours." Matters became still more serious when the idolatrous high priest, who stood on high ground to bind the strangers' hands by his magic arts, was slain by a stone skilfully hurled from a

sling. But, while the fierce fight proceeded, the rising tide once more floated the stranded vessel; and all, thanking God for their deliverance, arrived safely at Sandwich. How Wilfrid returned good for evil, by preaching the Gospel in this last refuge of heathenism in England, has yet to be told.

Wilfrid, never idle, found work to do during his three years' retirement at Ripon. He ordained many priests and deacons in Kent, pending Theodore's arrival; and also undertook divers episcopal duties in Mercia, where the king gave him many pieces of land for monasteries. Moving about from place to place with his church singers, with masons and men skilled in every art, he set church work on a new footing, introducing the rule of S. Benedict from abroad in all monasteries under his sway. Thus was Wilfrid employed when Archbishop Theodore placed him in the see of York in 669, removing Chad to Lichfield, and by this means retaining the services of both.

XXIV.—WILFRID, BISHOP OF YORK

(Bede, ii. 20; iii. 25; iv. 2, 12, 19, 26; v. 19. Eddi, 16-18, 21, 22, 24, 30)

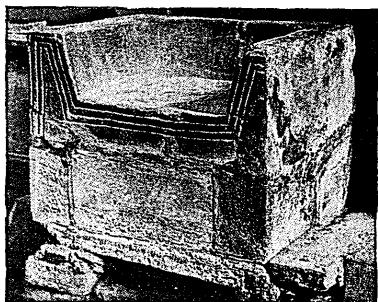
Wilfrid's magnificence in retirement was repeated on a still larger scale when placed in the see of York. A great builder, he was horrified at the neglect in which he found his cathedral church. The roof let in water, through the open windows the birds flew in and out, and the walls were filthy. This was the church, "square in form," begun by Edwin, to replace the wooden chapel in which he had been baptized by Paulinus. To restore a building of such sacred memories was a labour of love. A roof of lead and windows of glass, which let in light and excluded birds, were among the changes made; not to speak of rich fittings for the church and altar, and endowments in land.

His cathedral at York restored, Wilfrid turned to his beloved Ripon, building there a church of polished stone from its very foundations in the earth up to the roof. It was a great day when this church was consecrated; and Wilfrid was in his element in the stately ceremonial at which the king himself was present and others of high degree. Standing before the altar, with his face to the people, he read out the list of lands given to the church, and also, be it noted, another list of the sacred sites which the Britons had left behind them in their flight.

One special gift, made by the bishop himself, was deemed a miracle of beauty before unheard of; for he commanded the four Gospels to be written for the good of his soul in letters of the purest gold on purpled parchment, with a case for the books wrought with gold and precious stones; and this marvel was long preserved in Ripon Minster.

The service over, a great feast kept up three days and nights with the coarse plenty the people loved sent them back at last well content to their homes.

At Hexham, on land given him by Queen Etheldreda, he also built another church, the like of which, we are told,



[Photo by Gibson and Son, Hexham.]

FIG. 20.—WILFRID'S CHAIR AT HEXHAM.

was not to be found on this side of the Alps. When we remember that most buildings in that age were of wood, we realize how great must have been the effect of these wondrous churches in stone, with windows of glass and roofs of lead.

To the services to be held in these churches Wilfrid paid careful attention, and for this purpose he secured the assistance of Eddi, his enthusiastic biographer. He was the first choirmaster to be found in the north, except James the Deacon, who also, like Eddi, hailed from Kent, and had found in music a useful means of reaching the hearts of a rough but simple-minded people. Wilfrid's efforts in this direction were greatly helped by the arrival of Archbishop Theodore; from whose time the methods of choral worship, hitherto in use only in Kent, began to spread throughout all the churches of the English.*

In all these manifold activities Wilfrid did not neglect his duties as bishop. He ordained large supplies of priests and deacons, and was always riding from place to place to

* By this new method of singing is meant the Gregorian chant. See Plummer, ii. 118.

baptize and confirm. Meanwhile, though his own life was one of the strictest monastic discipline, his abstinence did not exalt him to spiritual pride; so that everyone loved him and everyone trusted him. Abbots and abbesses made him their guardian and left him their heir, and nobles entrusted to him their sons to be brought up under his eye, either for God's service, if they so desired, or to be presented in manhood as soldiers to the king.

Such was Wilfrid as Bishop of York. His immense gifts, so carefully cultivated in his travels abroad, found full scope in promoting civilization and religion in his huge diocese. It was not merely the love of power which made him bitterly resent the policy indicated at the Council of Hertford. A great position, wealth, and influence were his, but he valued these things as means with which to complete the work begun at Whitby, and to make the Church as catholic and broad in its sympathies as it had been before narrow and confined. It was a noble ideal, but the very scale on which it was pursued would naturally expose the great prelate to envy, and after nine years of unexampled prosperity the storm came which wrecked all.

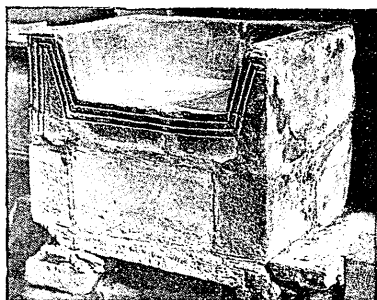
At first Egfrid, Oswy's son and successor, admired him as much as any of his subjects; and Etheldreda,* his queen, who gave him Hexham, sought his advice in her longings for a monastic life. She had never lived with the king as his wife; and at length, with his reluctant consent, she took the veil at Wilfrid's hands. Meanwhile Egfrid married again, and the new queen was no friend of the bishop. She never ceased to poison Egfrid's mind with her bitter comments on Wilfrid's worldly pomp, his wealth, the multitude of his monasteries, the huge size of the churches built by him, and the regal splendour of his countless attendants.

With so many grounds for a quarrel, it is not surprising

* See Supplement.

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With so many grounds for a quarrel, it is not surprising

* See Supplement.

that a dissension broke out between Wilfrid and Egfrid, in which the magnificent prelate was driven from his see. Thus the policy which had been received with such ominous silence at the Council of Hertford in 673 fell upon fruitful soil in the north in 678. Two bishops were ordained by Theodore in Wilfrid's room—Bosa, a pupil of S. Hilda, to York; and Eata, of whom we have already heard, to Lindisfarne and Hexham—while a third bishop, Eadhed, was ordained at the same time to the see of Lindsey, or Lincoln, a district lately recovered from Mercia for the time being. Three years later, during Wilfrid's exile, these three sees were enlarged into five; Lindisfarne and Hexham being divided into two, and a fifth see founded at Abercorn,* which lasted but a short time. Thus the north was well supplied with bishoprics, and it was possibly at this time that Theodore paid a visit to Lindisfarne. He found there no church of stone, but a wooden building of hewn oak covered with reeds, subsequently roofed and encased in lead. This lowly church Theodore hallowed in honour of S. Peter the Apostle, thus strengthening his authority in the centre of Aidan's mission.†

Returning to Wilfrid and his troubles, it was no small part of the sting that these consecrations, in which Theodore acted alone and without his consent, took place at York in the cathedral which he had so magnificently restored, and that the intruders belonged to the party defeated at Whitby. Nor was this the full measure of his wrongs. Not only his diocese, but also Ripon and Hexham with their majestic churches were taken from him. At the moment this seems to have been the more serious blow,

* For the seat of this bishopric see Plummer, ii. 224. It was founded in consequence of Egfrid's conquests in "the province of the Picts," and vanished with their loss. The situation of the "monastery of Abercorn" is carefully described, Bede, iv. 26.

† For the date of Theodore's visit to Lindisfarne see Plummer, ii. 188.

since it left him no place to which to retire till fortune should once more favour him as on a former occasion. But, nothing daunted by these repeated misfortunes, Wilfrid boldly appeared before the king and archbishop; and demanded why, without any fault laid against him, they had seized his property after the manner of robbers; and this was their infamous reply: "We charge thee with no crime, but our fixed decrees concerning thee we change not." Defiance was Wilfrid's answer to this sentence. He appealed to the judgment of the Apostolic See; and turning to the flatterers, who mocked him as he left the royal tribunal which denied him justice, he added, "On the anniversary of this day, on which you now laugh maliciously at my condemnation, you will weep bitterly to your own confusion." His words seemed justified the next year in the untimely death of the king's brother, Alfwyn, whose body was brought to York for burial amidst much lamentation, in which the people tore their garments and their hair.*

Thus commenced the case of Wilfrid, which lasted for the rest of his chequered life, and robbed his native land of the advantage of his immense abilities; a heavy loss indeed, though the force of his genius asserted itself in other fields. If at first sight Wilfrid figures as the victim of brutal tyranny, in Egfrid's favour it may be admitted that the splendid position this prelate had built up for himself might well appear a source of danger to the State; and as regards the archbishop, though his action seems unjust as well as uncanonical, indications are not wanting which serve to soften the hard things said of him.† In

* Eddi's statements at this point must be received with caution. That Theodore, for instance, accepted a bribe, as Eddi asserts, is incredible, and but reveals his partiality. Eddi, 24.

† See Plummer, ii. 323, and Lingard, i. 132, on the conquest of Lindsey dated by him A.D. 677.

any case, it will be seen that Wilfrid, in his appeal, stood virtually alone;* and that the verdict of his countrymen in Church and State was against what was to them a new and outlandish attempt to settle disputes outside the realm.

SUPPLEMENT: S. ETHELDREDA (ETHELDRED)

(Bede, iv. 19)

If Wilfrid's career was partly wrecked by the unhesitating support he gave to Queen Etheldreda in a "resolution the reverse of wifelike,"† it was no new idea on her part, for Egfrid was her second nominal husband. This circumstance, so painful to us, redounded to her praise in an age when the monastic ideal was apt, as in this case, to run to an extreme sanctioned neither by law nor Gospel.

Twelve years she lived with Egfrid, his wedded wife and yet not a wife; and long had she requested him that he would permit her to lay aside all worldly cares, and to serve Christ the only true King, in a monastery. It was at Coldingham, over which the king's aunt Ebba presided, that she took the veil; but it was not safe for her to remain in the northern kingdom, so she fled to Ely, and there founded a convent for herself. The place at that time, when the fenlands were still undrained, was well suited for her purpose. It was like an island surrounded either by marshes or waters; whence it took its name from the abundance of eels which are caught in those marshes.

Here she lived for the last seven years of her life, enjoying the happiness which she had so long craved for; and her piety won for her an increasing reputation as the

* Eddi's account of the suffragan bishops at the time of the appeal is not clear. Eddi, 24, 30. None of them supported Wilfrid, during his exile. See Bright, 293, 294 note.

† Bright, 289.

abbess and virgin mother of her flock. It is told of her that she never wore linen, but always wool, and that she seldom indulged in a warm bath save on the eves of the great festivals; and even then she only allowed herself this luxury the last of all, when she had washed the feet of the rest of the servants of Christ, with the assistance of her attendants.

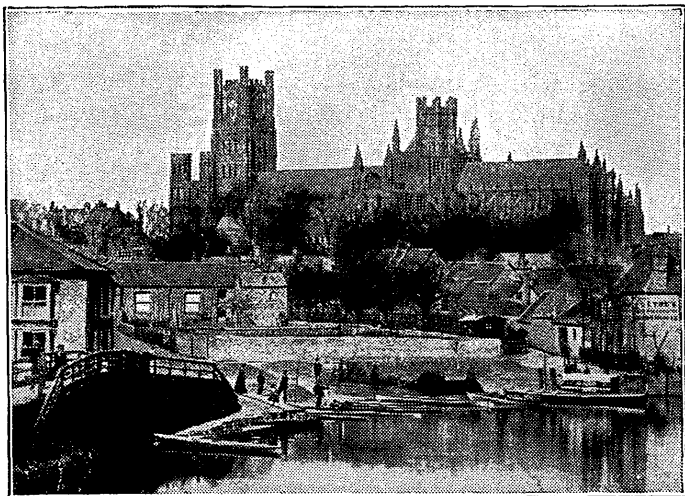


FIG. 21.—ELY CATHEDRAL.

[Photo by Valentine.]

One meal a day was her usual allowance, save on festivals or from necessity; and unless ill-health positively prevented it she never failed to remain in church, intent on prayer, from matins soon after midnight till daybreak.

The illness which curbed these austerities was an extremely painful one—an enormous tumour under the jaw—but she bore it with delight. “This ailment pleases me well,” she was wont to say. “In my young days, I re-

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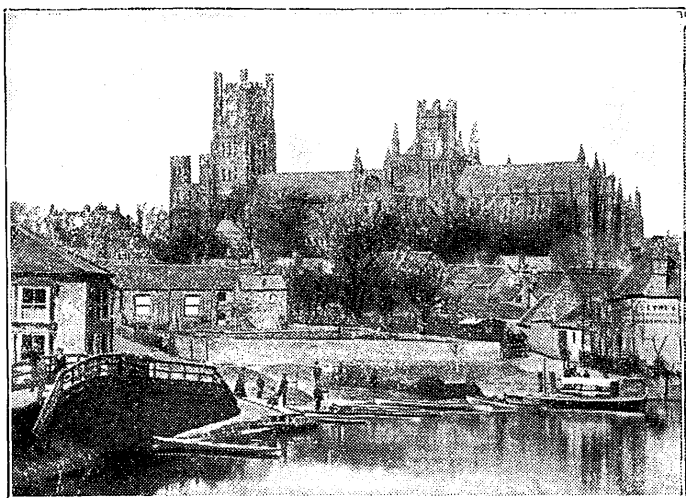


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The illness which curbed these austerities was an extremely painful one—an enormous tumour under the jaw—but she bore it with delight. “This ailment pleases me well,” she was wont to say. “In my young days, I re-

member, I used to wear a heavy necklace; but now in the place of gold and pearls appears this red and fiery tumour, fit penance for my former vanity, if it may but avail." In connection with this pious reflection it is curious to notice that from a corrupted form of her name, Audrey, "comes our word tawdry." "A tawdry lace—i.e., necklace"* was sold at the fair held on the festival of her translation as a fitting memorial of the saint; but space does not suffice to explain how "the whirligig of time" thus brought "his revenges."

This translation was due to the fact that she was originally buried after her death from the plague, according to her express desire, with her people, and in a wooden coffin; but sixteen years later her sister Sexburga, who succeeded her as abbess, determined to place the bones within the church in a coffin of stone. One of white marble, beautifully wrought, with a lid to match, was, however, found by the monks in the deserted city of Grantchester, to which they went by water, near the future site of Cambridge and its famous university. This ready-made coffin fitted the virgin's body as if intended for it, especially in the place cut for the head.

A tent was spread over the grave, when the bones were taken up to be washed and removed. The whole congregation stood without, singing psalms, the brothers on one side and the sisters on the other; while the abbess and a few with her were within, filled with awe and delight to find the body still uncorrupt, as Bishop Wilfrid testified and many others. Suddenly the abbess was heard to exclaim with a loud voice, "Glory be to God." The tent door was opened, and the physician who had cut the tumour three days before the death of the deceased was called inside. The body was lying upon a bed as if asleep, and the veil being

* Plummer, ii. 235.

removed from the face, he was shown that in place of the open gaping wound left by his operation, only a very slender scar remained. The linen clothes, too, were quite whole and fresh, and many miracles were wrought by them.

These many marvels may, perhaps, be partly explained by the rigid abstinence of the saint's life for so many years. If there is something gruesome in the details so fondly treasured by the piety of that age, it is also true that, while the festival of "Aidan's Rest" and "the Passion of thy servant Oswald" have dropped out of the calendar, the translation of S. Etheldreda is still preserved, on October 17, among the black-letter saints' days of the English Prayer Book.

XXV.—WILFRID IN EXILE

(Bede, iv. 13; v. 19. Eddi, 26, 29-32, 34, 36, 39-41)

Wilfrid, having determined to appeal, lost no time in leaving England. Crossing the sea, he spent the winter in Friesland, "the land beyond the Zuyder Zee,"* and, aided by an unwonted harvest of sea and land that year, he preached the Gospel with much success to this heathen people. By the time the spring returned, and his journey could be renewed, he had virtually started the first mission-field of the Church of England, before it had well ceased to be a mission Church itself. For though this work of a single winter was not blessed with permanent results, Wilfrid's zeal in adversity was brought to a more successful conclusion by Willibrord, a monk of his beloved Ripon, not to speak of abundant fruit in other directions as well.†

At Rome Wilfrid received every consideration. It is true the division of his diocese was sanctioned by the Pope; but the intruding bishops were to be dismissed, and the whole work done over again with the consent of the prelate most concerned. As if to add to Wilfrid's triumph, a Council was sitting at Rome at which he was invited to take his place; and as Bishop of York "he made confession of the true and Catholic faith, and subscribed the same on behalf of all the northern part of Britain and Ireland, and the islands which were inhabited by the nations of the Angles and Britons, and also of the Picts and Scots."

With deep regret Wilfrid once more tore himself away, and reached home, bringing with him the Papal decrees, which were to him as "a banner of victory." A deep

* Bright, 298.

† On the further missions see Supplement.

disappointment awaited his sanguine nature. The document triumphantly produced, with its bulls, and seals all complete, was treated with scant respect by king and Council. Some rejected it with contempt, others still more shamefully cried out that it had been bought with a bribe. Nay, more, Wilfrid's appeal was treated as an insult against the realm, and the unhappy bishop cast for nine months into durance vile, without honour, and in but the clothes he wore.

But even the hardships of confinement in a dungeon, seldom visited by sunshine and never by a lamp, could not quench his dauntless spirit. He sang his psalms as if still in one of the stately minsters he had built in happier days; and if the king tried to arrange a compromise, on condition that he would acknowledge the document brought from Rome to be false, back from the dungeon came the stern reply, "I would lose my head rather than confess that." This deadlock was brought to an end by the serious illness of the queen, and he was permitted to leave the realm and go where he would. But the relentless hate at home would not suffer him to remain in peace in any Christian land; and driven from Mercia and Wessex, Wilfrid took refuge in Sussex, the one remaining heathen kingdom left in England. It was a momentous step, for it made him not only the first missionary to the heathen abroad, but also the last missionary to the heathen English at home; besides giving him a fresh opportunity of showing that love of souls which was in him alike in prosperity and adversity. Thus did Wilfrid pluck a crown from his many sorrows, and place himself alongside Augustine, Paulinus, and Aidan, as an apostle to his countrymen.

Untouched by the missions of Augustine or Birinus on either side, heathen Sussex had been left wellnigh to itself; partly in consequence, no doubt, of the dense woods and

marshes which cut it off in a barbaric isolation;* and if a beginning had been made before Wilfrid arrived this was due neither to Kent nor Wessex. Wulfhere of Mercia had persuaded its king, Ethelwalch, to become a Christian, and had received him as his godson as he came up from the font. The queen was already a Christian; and a mission had also been started, probably in consequence of the king's conversion, at Bosham, where six Irish monks, with Dicul as their abbot, had founded a very small monastery. But the poverty and humility with which they served God had no effect whatever upon the heathen around them; so utterly were they despised that none would imitate their life, or so much as listen to their preaching. The task which lay before the exiled bishop seemed, therefore, well-nigh hopeless at the outset, and its gloomy aspect was not made the more bright by his previous acquaintance with Sussex; for, as we have already seen, he had once nearly fallen into the hands of cruel wreckers upon its coast. But the lively recollection of his danger in the past would but quicken rather than quench his ardour for the work which lay before him. With all his soul he would long to preach the Gospel to those who had sought his life.

A prolonged drought, in which no rain had fallen for three years, became in his hands the means of reaching the hearts of a people as yet callous and indifferent to the message of the Gospel. So great was the distress that often, it is said, forty or fifty men at a time, reduced to a shadow by despair and want, would go to some sea-cliff or beach, and joining hands together in their misery, cast themselves down or rush into the waves to their death.

Now Wilfrid, like S. Paul, able to be all things to all men, perceived that these barbarous wretches were actually perishing of famine in the midst of plenty. Their sea and

* Bright, 191. See Eddi, 41.

rivers were alike full of fish, but they knew not how to catch them, save eels alone. By his direction eel nets were collected from every quarter, and the bishop's men cast them into the sea. In due course they were hauled in,



FIG. 22.—WILFRID SHOWS HIS CONVERTS HOW TO FISH.

and three hundred fishes of different sorts taken. These Wilfrid commanded to be divided into three heaps: one for the poor, one for the lenders of the nets, and the third for themselves. “By which good service the bishop mightily

turned all hearts to love him; and they were the more willing to hope for heavenly things at his preaching after they had, through his help, received earthly good."

So the turn of the tide came at last for which the monks of Bosham had so long sighed in vain. With the glad consent of the king, the bishop was soon able to baptize his chief men and officers, while the four priests who accompanied him into exile, then or afterwards, baptized the rest of the people. "And on that day on which the people received the baptism of faith, a soft but steady rain descended. Once more the parched soil was clothed with green fields, the year came round again glad and fruitful; and so, having rejected with loathing their former idolatry, the heart and flesh of the people rejoiced in the living God, understanding that He who is the true God had enriched them by His heavenly grace, with both inward and outward blessings."

SUPPLEMENT: EARLY MISSIONS OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

(Bede, iii. 4, 13, 27; v. 9, 10, 11)

The further mission to Friesland was started, independently of Wilfrid, by Egbert the priest; famous amongst other things for his austerities, in that he allowed himself, for instance in Lent and at other seasons of the Christian year, but one meal a day of bread and skimmed milk, and that by measure. One of the reasons why Egbert proposed to himself to preach to nations which had not yet heard the word of God, was that he knew that there were in Germany many such nations, from which the Angles or Saxons, who now inhabit Britain, "are known to have derived their race and origin." This claim of kinship belonged, amongst others, to the people of Friesland; but Egbert was not

suffered to carry out his noble resolve, being warned against it by the visions of one of the brethren. "Go tell him," this was the mysterious message, "that whether he will or no he shall go to the monasteries of Columba; because their ploughs do not go straight, and it behoves him to recall them to the right way." Thus it was foretold to him that he should win the famous monastery of Iona to the true and Catholic Easter; but unmindful of this glory in store for him Egbert still went on with his preparations. A violent storm one night, which destroyed no small part of the ship's cargo, though all that belonged to Egbert and his companions was saved, convinced him of his error. Like another Jonah, "On my account is this storm," he cried, and stayed at home.

One of his companions, Wietbert, actually embarked in spite of the disaster, but he returned after preaching for two years, having accomplished nothing; and his failure seems to prove that Wilfrid's flying visit had not produced much lasting effect. At last Egbert, still kept back himself, secured the right man to reap where Wilfrid had sown, in Willibrord, who started at the head of a little band of twelve.

They began by turning aside to Pippin, Duke of the Franks, who had lately conquered part of Friesland, and expelled its king, Radbod, who had refused to listen to the preaching of Wietbert. It is of Radbod that the story is told that when he was at last induced to approach the font he stood with one foot in the water, and enquired what had become of his heathen ancestors. Assured that they were in hell, he withdrew his foot, muttering that he preferred the company of his own people in another world, rather than to sit down with a few poor folk in the heavenly kingdom.* To return to Willibrord and his party—by

* Vita Wulframni, A.A.S.S. Bolland. Appendix.

Pippin they were graciously received, and supported by the sovereign authority of a prince who bestowed many favours on those who received the faith, they soon, by the aid of God's grace, converted many from idolatry.

Willibrord, however, was not content with the arm of the flesh; and as soon as he had obtained permission to preach, he went to Rome to obtain the blessing of the Pope. From the Pope he also begged for relics of Apostles and martyrs, to be placed in churches dedicated in their honour. During his absence the brethren in Friesland chose one of their number, called Swidbert, to be ordained bishop for them. He was consecrated by Wilfrid, during the vacancy at Canterbury, owing to the death of Archbishop Theodore, and laboured with much success in "Rhenish Prussia."* It was but a few years later that Wilfrid, on his way to his second appeal, visited the mission in person, and found Willibrord there after another visit to the Pope. For, before this meeting took place, Pippin, with the consent of all, had sent Willibrord to Rome again; and he was there consecrated by the same Pope he had visited before, with the new name of Clement, as archbishop of the Frisians in 696. His second visit to Rome was brief, but fourteen days in all; and his see was fixed at Utrecht, where he built his cathedral, and founded many churches and monasteries. As Willibrord lived to be eighty-one,* he had time to accomplish a great work before he died in 739.†

The labours of Willibrord and his companions inspired another effort in Saxony which had a tragic fate. Two priests, who both bore the same name, and were known as Black Hewald and White Hewald from the colour of their hair, arrived in those parts, and put up at the house of a village headman, with a view to being sent on to the

* Bright, 384, in explanation of Bede's statement that Swidbert preached to the "Boructuarians or Bructerians."

† Alc. Vita Will, ii. 24. See also Bright, 385 and note.

chief of the district. Meanwhile their psalm singing and prayers and daily offering of the Eucharistic sacrifice provoked suspicion; for they had with them sacred vessels, and a table hallowed to serve as an altar. They never reached the chief, whom it was feared they might convert to their outlandish faith. Instead, White Hewald was slain with the sword, and Black Hewald torn limb from limb with prolonged tortures. Their mangled remains were cast into the Rhine; but the bodies were afterwards recovered, and buried with all honour, by Pippin's orders, at Cologne. As for the village where the martyrdom had taken place, it was destroyed by fire, and its inhabitants slain to the last man by the very chief whose conversion they sought to prevent.

A more successful career than that of the two Hewalds must also be briefly noticed, in which Willibrord was surpassed by a man yet mightier than himself. For three years he was assisted in Friesland by Winfrid, a monk of Exeter,* who, like S. Willibrord, was consecrated by the Pope himself with a new name, and who became S. Boniface, Apostle of Germany and Martyr.

Such, briefly told, was the history of the first English mission-field abroad, started by one of the most versatile of Englishmen, watered by English blood, and fostered by English missionaries. Within the limits of the British Empire alone what a call there is, not, it is true, from our heathen kinsfolk across the sea, but from our heathen fellow-subjects in India and elsewhere, to emulate the zeal of a S. Willibrord and a S. Boniface !

* See Bright, 322 note, in explanation of Adestancastre or Adescanastre. Vita S. Bonifacii, by Willibald.

XXVI.—THE LAST REFUGE OF HEATHENISM

(Bede, iv. 13-16; v. 7, 19. Eddi, 43, 44)

Ethelwalch now hastened to find a see for the bishop who had so wonderfully accomplished the impossible; and Selsey was not only intended as the seat of a bishopric, but as a place where Wilfrid could found a monastery for himself and his fellow-exiles, and enjoy the regular rule of life. As its name "Seal's Isle" implies, it was wellnigh an island, with the sea on three sides, but joined to the mainland on the west, with an entrance of about a sling's throw in width. This virtual island, large enough to maintain eighty-seven families, became the bishop's own, with all its resources, lands, and men.

The right royal nature of the gift must have almost painfully recalled to Wilfrid the splendid position which had once been his at home, but his zeal for Christ forbade useless repining. Amongst the serfs whom he baptized after due instruction, he found two hundred and fifty slaves; all of whom "he saved by baptizing them from slavery to the devil, and by granting them their liberty set them free from the yoke of slavery to man." Thus for five years, that is till the death of Egfrid, Wilfrid, honoured by all, fulfilled the duties of a bishop in word and deed.*

A touching story is told of the retreat of these exiles from Northumbria, connecting it with the dying prayer of the saintly king of their native land. The plague visited them there, carrying off many of Wilfrid's friends and converts; and a three days' fast had been appointed to beseech God against its ravages. On the second day a vision was

* The five years are 681-686, but see Plummer, ii. 318, 319.

vouchsafed to a little boy of great simplicity and piety, and but lately called to the faith, who lay sick of it. To him, as he was alone in bed, appeared the blessed princes of the Apostles, Peter and Paul, and graciously addressed him: "Fear not death, my son, for we this very day will conduct you to the heavenly kingdom; but first wait till Masses are celebrated, that you may receive the viaticum of the Lord's Body and Blood." The sick lad was further told to call to him Eappa the priest, who ruled over the monastery; and to tell him that their prayers were heard, and the plague should cease. All who were ill of it should recover save himself; and this was granted by the intercession of the religious King Oswald, beloved of God, who on that very day had been slain by the heathen and numbered with the elect, and in dying had prayed for all his nation, and therefore for them, as for men of his race tarrying in a strange land. Furthermore, by the direction of the two Apostles, Masses were to be said in all the oratories of the monastery in thanksgiving for release from the plague, as well as in memory of Oswald the king; and after all had communicated in the heavenly sacrifices, as well as the dying boy, the monks were to go to their morning meal, the feast being at an end. Explicit as these directions were, there was yet one more which seems to show that these exiled monks had overlooked the day of Oswald's death; for a special message was given to them to search their books, where they would find it entered in the list of departed saints. When the sick lad told his tale to Eappa, the priest asked him to describe the two Apostles, and the child replied in the artless language of his tender years, that they had faces most fair and pleasant, such as he had never seen or thought to see before. Their names, they had told him, were Peter and Paul, and one was shorn like a clerk while the other had a long beard. On leaving the patient Eappa searched his "an-

nale ”; and it was, as the boy had said, the day of Oswald’s death. All was done as the heavenly visitors had directed, and the boy died, as foretold, but the plague was stayed.*

The peaceful advance of Christianity in Sussex was first disturbed and then assisted by troubles of a different nature. Cadwalla, a daring member of the royal house of Wessex, driven from his own country, took refuge in its woods and fastnesses. Ethelwalch was slain in battle, and his kingdom laid waste with cruel slaughter. Though with the death of the king the desolated land, putting forth its full strength, drove out the invader, Cadwalla soon returned, no longer an exile, but the King of Wessex, and completed its subjection.

And what of Wilfrid, who by these inroads had lost his patron in the slaughtered king? It is somewhat strange to find the Apostle of Sussex the friend of its merciless foe, and so much the friend, that when Cadwalla completed his triumph in Sussex by the conquest of its dependency, the Isle of Wight, he gave to the bishop’s use on behalf of our Lord—in accordance with a vow he had made though himself unbaptized—a fourth part of the island and its booty. It was thus that the Isle of Wight became Christian at the hands of a heathen who had tried to exterminate its inhabitants, and replace them from his own country; and the story of its first converts is as brutal as that of its conquest.

There were two native princes whose hiding-place on the mainland was betrayed to the conqueror. Death should have been their fate without further question; but it was requested for the two lads—for they were no more—that they might at least be spared till they could be baptized. This was granted, and after their baptism the two princes

* See Bright, 160, 316 and note. He remarks, “It is easy to see how the story grew from this detailed form.”

went joyfully to their temporal death, assured of the salvation of the soul. Their martyr-like end was long remembered as that "of the first-fruits of the natives of that island who were saved by faith."

If Cadwalla's career recalls that of the mighty Penda, in the slaughter of a Christian king and the harrying of a Christian land, unlike that heathen hero the remembrance of so much bloodshed lay heavy on his soul. Resigning his crown, after reigning two years, he went to Rome that he might have the peculiar honour of being baptized at the thresholds of the Apostles, and in the hope that with baptism he might be called from this earthly scene. His hopes were realized in this as in all else. The Pope himself baptized him, on Easter Eve of 689, and gave him the new name of Peter, and while still wearing the baptismal robe he fell sick and died. Buried at S. Peter's with a long epitaph recording his pious exit from the world, his example became a fashion only too widely followed, for it was imitated by his successor and many others of the English nation, clergy and laity, gentle and simple.

It was some three years before this that Wilfrid returned home. Theodore's admiration for the exile who had accomplished so much may well have prompted his good offices. Egfrid had fallen miserably in battle; and by the archbishop's intercession Wilfrid was reconciled to the new king, and recalled to Northumbria. Sussex, however, remained subject to Wessex, and its see of Selsey merged in that of Winchester; to be restored in happier days and finally transferred, as at the present time, to Chichester.

But ninety years had elapsed since Augustine had landed upon the shores of Kent, when Wilfrid left the last heathen kingdom as a Christian land in 686. It is a marvellously short space of time, when the divided state of the future England, and the difficulties it caused are considered. The

appearance, too, of such earthly weapons as fire and sword only at the last stage in the great work serves to emphasize the splendid devotion of the various missionaries, who had relied so completely upon the life-giving power of the Gospel which they preached.

Leaving then the Apostle of Sussex about to return home from an exile so glorious, in which he had pursued heathenism to its last recognized home in the Isle of Wight, let us turn to the work going on in England as a whole during his absence from the north, beginning with the effect produced by his exile in Northumbria itself, and then turning to the erection of fresh sees elsewhere in accordance with the policy of Archbishop Theodore.

XXVII.—THE COUNCIL OF HATFIELD

(Bede, iii. 28; iv. 1, 12, 17, 18, 21; v. 24, Conclusion. Bede, Hist. Abbatum, 3-7, 9. Anon., Hist. Abbatum, 4-6, 9-11)

While Wilfrid was so bravely wrestling with adverse fate, Theodore was no less active in the work which he had undertaken in his vigorous old age. As versatile as Wilfrid himself, he was able to turn even the incessant wars of the petty kings, with whom he had to deal, to account. In 679 another of these wars broke out between Northumbria and Mercia, in which Alfwin, Egfrid's brother, was slain in battle* at the early age of eighteen, to the great grief of friend and foe; for his sister was the Queen of Mercia, and he was beloved on both sides. The untimely death of this prince, as we have already seen, recalled to the friends of Wilfrid the wild prophecy with which he had left the tribunal which denied him justice.† It must therefore have been a disappointment to them that, though serious consequences were expected from the disaster, the flames of a long and disastrous strife were extinguished by the wholesome exhortations of Theodore the archbishop, beloved of God; and a lasting peace was made which prevented Wilfrid from finding a refuge in Mercia in his exile. Ethelred, its king, paid the customary fine, or wergild, for Alfwin's death; while Egfrid handed back Lincolnshire once more to Mercia. The see which had been so recently founded there was, however, retained, but with a new prelate; while Eadhed retired to Ripon, where he probably acted as bishop. This retention of the see of Lindsey seems

* For the marvellous story of one of Alfwin's followers see Supplement.

† See ch. xxiv.

to have led to the creation of smaller ones in Mercia; and if so, Theodore's triumph in Northumbria was repeated there the next year. At any rate, a beginning was made which led to the more gradual division of S. Chad's diocese, but of this it will be more convenient to treat later on.*

Meanwhile, with so much to occupy him in Church and State, Theodore called his second Council at Hatfield in 680. A new heresy had broken out in his native East; and the Pope was desirous, as in other provinces, so also in Britain, to have a full and unanimous declaration of the faith of the West. Though the circumstances account for it, it is certainly strange to find that it was the same Pope, who had so lately condemned the conduct of Theodore by his verdict in Wilfrid's favour, who sent the abbot John to the archbishop, to lay before the Council in England the decision which had been arrived at in Rome, by a synod held on the same heresy.

Theodore was not merely content with presiding over the bishops assembled, with a copy of the holy Gospels solemnly laid before them, as at "other and grander Councils"; he diligently examined the priests and doctors who were also present, with the result that all were found sound in the Catholic faith, and a most satisfactory report was forwarded to the Pope by his representative.†

As at Hertford, Theodore carefully committed the proceedings to writing, but no list of the bishops present was added. In their place the chief kings reigning at the time were recorded. The change cannot but remind us of the bishop whose absence was not accidental on this occasion.

* The further division of Mercia is described in ch. xxix.

† Bright, who gives a long and minute account of the heresy at this time troubling the Church, 325-330. "Monothelism was finally condemned in the Sixth General Council, that of Constantinople, which sat from November, 680, to September, 681." It was "the denial of the existence and operation of two wills, the human and the Divine, in the person of Christ." Plummer, ii. 230.

Wilfrid was in prison, and everyone was judiciously silent on this painful subject. Even the representative of the Pope apparently said nothing on behalf of the bishop who was more than qualified to give weight to the proceedings, having made a profession on behalf of Northern Britain while at Rome; and who had, moreover, lost all by his appeal. No doubt, as it has been pointed out, "it did not lie in his commission to enter on such matters"; but this was cold comfort to Wilfrid in his dungeon, and nothing is more striking than the way his dauntless spirit survived so many crushing blows.

Besides attending the Council, the abbot John had another duty to perform which places his mission to England in a more pleasant light; and the way this came about requires some account of one who, though he was as great a patron of the latest arts of civilization as Wilfrid himself, yet had no sympathy with him in his appeal.

Benedict Biscop had been selected as Wilfrid's companion on his first journey abroad; but, as we have already seen, they had soon separated. It was on his third visit to Rome that the Pope bade him act as guide and interpreter to the Greek he had just consecrated as archbishop for England. Benedict did as he was commanded, and on their arrival at Canterbury he presided for two years over the vacant abbey of S. Peter and S. Paul, till Hadrian could undertake it; for the Pope had expressly charged Theodore to provide a suitable place for Hadrian where he could live with his servants, and also (it is strange to remember in connection with the Council at Hatfield) keep watch and ward over the Greek archbishop lest he should prove unsound!

Benedict was nothing loth to be set free. He made his fourth visit to Rome; and on his return he showed to Egfrid the treasures he had collected in books and relics. The king was so much impressed that he gave him land

from his own estates, on which to build the monastery of S. Peter's, Monkswearmouth. This was in 674, and the next year Benedict was in Gaul (now France), collecting masons; for he had determined that the church should be built of stone after the manner of the Romans, which he had always admired; and within one year after the foundation was laid the roof was on, and Masses were being said. Like Wilfrid, Benedict was an introducer of glass into his

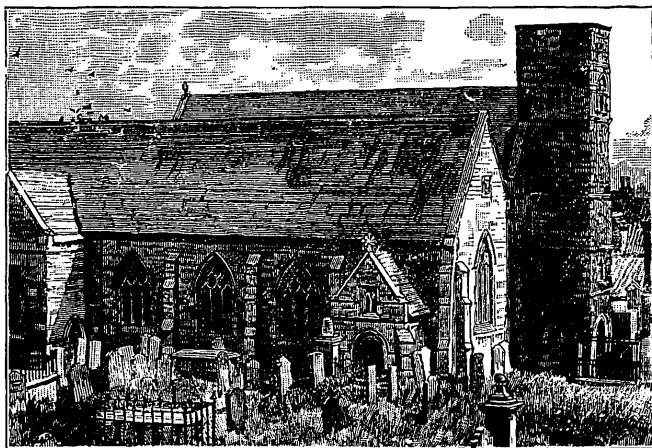


FIG. 23.—MONKSWEARMOUTH CHURCH.

native land. It was used to glaze the windows of the church and its porch, and also the windows of the domestic buildings. When we remember that Wilfrid's work at York and Ripon and Hexham was in progress at this time, it is interesting to find that these two pioneers of civilization were brought together again, by similarity of tastes and interests. Wilfrid had at Ripon a monk named Ceolfrid whom he had ordained priest; and of whom it is told that,

while he filled the lowly office of baker to the community, he would learn and perfect himself in the ceremonial duties of the priesthood. Ceolfrid had been made prior of Ripon by the time that Benedict secured him to fill the like post in his new foundation.

But not even in Gaul could Benedict obtain all that he wanted; and a fifth journey to Rome was made, in which Ceolfrid, his fellow-worker obtained from Wilfrid, accompanied him. An immense quantity of books were brought back, and also of relics enough to bring a future blessing on many an English church. In addition, there were pictures to adorn the church; those of the Virgin Mary and of the Apostles, stretched on a board from wall to wall, scenes from the Gospel story on the south wall, and scenes from the Revelation on the north wall; that those who came in, however ignorant of letters, might find something to instruct them whichever way they looked, as they gazed, though only in a picture, on the ever adorable countenance of Christ and His saints, the grace of the Incarnation, and the perils of the Last Judgment.

A letter of privilege, rendering his monastery free from all outside interference, was a special favour obtained from the Pope himself, with the express sanction of King Egfrid, an important point in connection with the troubles of Wilfrid. But it did not stand alone. Benedict calmly asked that the abbot John, who was the precentor of S. Peter's as well as abbot of S. Martin's, Rome, might be sent to teach his monks music. This very bold request the Pope saw fit to grant, having a further purpose to serve in doing so. It was in this way that the abbot John came to England; to attend the Council at Hatfield, and to aid Benedict's great designs. He taught his monks the system of chanting and reading as it was practised throughout the year at S. Peter's, and together with this system he

also wrote out for them a whole year's course of celebrating festivals. These written directions were frequently copied out for other monasteries, from which the abbot John received many invitations to teach, which he most kindly accepted; and besides, from almost all the monasteries in that neighbourhood, those who were skilful in chanting flocked together to hear the great precentor who had come all the way from Rome. In these labours the abbot John did not forget the more important part of his mission. By his direction the copyist of Benedict's monastery wrote out, for future reference, the decision of the synod held at Rome which he had brought with him, and which was duly accepted at Hatfield. The copy, however, of the proceedings of Theodore's second Council, which he took back with him, he did not live to present, for he died on the way home.*

So closed the Council of Hatfield, with Wilfrid in prison and on his way into exile, and none speaking a word in his favour. Even Benedict, who had so much in common with him, had no sympathy with his appeal. Indeed, he was as much in favour at court as Wilfrid was in disgrace. For Egfrid was so struck by his zeal and industry that he gave him yet more land on which to build S. Paul's, Jarrow. Ceolfrid, once Wilfrid's prior at Ripon, became the abbot of this additional monastery, and took with him there twenty-two inmates of Monkswearmouth. This original connection was indeed carefully maintained. The twin foundations being designed to form but one monastery in two places, joined together in the brotherly fellowship of the first Apostles.

Benedict, before his touching death, made yet a sixth journey to Rome, from which, amongst other treasures, he brought back with him pictures for the church of

* The abbot John would teach the Gregorian chant.

S. Paul's, Jarrow, illustrating the types and antitypes of the Old and New Testament—Isaac with the wood for the burnt offering, and Moses and the Serpent in the wilderness appearing on one wall; Jesus bearing His Cross, and the Son of Man exalted upon the Cross on the other. We can imagine the excitement at Jarrow, as before at Monkswearmouth, when these pictures were put up, pictures which were to be the almost daily companions of one who was but a lad when they arrived. For though Benedict Biscop's life has been told here in connection with the Council of Hatfield and Wilfrid's appeal, it is of profound interest in itself; and his loving care for civilization and religion was richly blessed, in a way he did not live to see, in a small boy whom Ceolfrid took with him from Monkswearmouth to Jarrow, and who lived to become the Venerable Bede.

SUPPLEMENT: BELIEF IN PURGATORY

(Bede, iii. 19; iv. 22; v. 12; see also v. 13, 14)

In support of this doctrine Bede inserts in his "History," on the authority of those who heard it from the man himself, the story of Imma, which, briefly told, was as follows: Imma was one of the attendants of "king" Alfwin, and was left for dead upon the field after the battle in which his master fell, but afterwards recovered. Being taken prisoner, his chains repeatedly fell off; and, when asked if this was the result of heathen arts, he denied it. He had a brother, he explained, who was a priest, and who, thinking him to be dead, said Masses for his soul that it might be released from pain. Sold into slavery, he was allowed to ransom himself, since he could not be bound, and when he returned home he told his brother the effect of his intercession; for it was at the time that Masses were said that his chains generally fell off. Many who heard Imma's account of

himself were "stirred up to greater devotion, and especially to offer to God the victim of the sacred oblation for the release of their friends who had departed from this world; for they understood that the salutary sacrifice availed for the eternal redemption of soul and body."

Bright points out that this story illustrates "the current belief in purgatory,"* for it does not stand alone. It may be compared with the visions of Fursey, already alluded to, and also those of a monk of Melrose no less minute in detail, which these two ascetics were accustomed to tell to those who were fit to hear them. The monk of Melrose, whose name was Drythelm, was shown, for instance, in a trance the realms of the dead. In one place were souls suffering from excess of heat, or else from piercing cold; while beyond a wall of immense height were regions of light full of fragrant flowers, where the souls of the blessed, clothed in white, abode nigh to heaven itself, but not yet accounted worthy of its bliss. Like Fursey, Drythelm was noted for his excessive ascetism. Sometimes he would stand up to the middle, or even up to the neck, in the river which ran by his monastery, repeating Psalms and prayers as long as he could endure it; leaving his clothes to dry on him when he came out. In the winter he would break the ice for the same purpose; and when those who saw it said to him, "I wonder, brother Drythelm, that you can endure such excess of cold," he would reply with much simplicity, "I have seen greater cold"; and when they added, "It is wonderful that you should indulge in such austerity," he would reply, "I have seen greater austerity."

These frightful excesses would sufficiently account for such visions if they had been original, but similar visions

* Bright, 310 note.

can be traced back to the second century.* The way in which they undermined the great reserve of Holy Writ concerning the Intermediate State, and encouraged a use of the Eucharist, entirely unforeseen at the first, is one of the sad pages in the history of Christ's Church.

* Plummer, ii. 294, 295.

XXVIII.—S. CUTHBERT

(Bede iv. 27, 28, 29, 30)

The Council of Hatfield abundantly shows how completely Wilfrid stood alone in his opposition to Theodore. This universal compliance might seem, as in the case of Benedict and Ceolfrid, a passive rather than an active support of the archbishop's policy, did not the history of the disputed sees forbid such a theory. There was no difficulty whatever in filling them with men as saintly as Wilfrid himself, but who had no more scruple than Egfrid or Theodore in ignoring the decrees obtained from Rome. One of these bishops, Cuthbert, whose history largely includes that of another, Eata, has been called "the great popular saint of the north country,"* and his life left an impression so profound that it overshadowed the glories even of a S. Aidan.

From his very childhood Cuthbert had longed for a religious life, but it was in early manhood that he became a monk at Melrose, on the banks of the Tweed; of which monastery, in addition to the one at Lindisfarne, Eata was abbot at that time and Boisil the prior. It was from the latter that Cuthbert received the knowledge of the Scriptures and an example of good works; and he so endeared himself to his superiors that on the prior's death he was advanced to the vacant post, to which Boisil's zeal had attached a larger sphere of work than the oversight of the monastery itself.

The faith of Christ had gained but a slight hold in that countryside. Not to speak of many evil lives, in times

* Bright, 354.

of mortality the sacraments were often neglected for the enchantments and spells recommended by idolatry as a remedy against the plague. This lax Christianity was, in fact, the natural result of the vast scale on which the new religion had originally been preached, and Cuthbert but followed in the steps of his revered teacher in his efforts to correct it.

Sometimes on horseback, but more often on foot, he visited the neighbouring towns to preach, assured of a welcome beforehand; for it was the custom of the time that, when a clerk or priest came their way, the people would willingly flock together to hear the word; and such was Cuthbert's eloquence, his intense delight in persuading his hearers, and the glow which lit up his angelic face, that none could hide from him the secrets of their hearts. Concealment in his case was felt to be useless, and even the penance which followed confession was willingly undertaken when he commanded it.

In this work Cuthbert never spared himself, visiting especially the most out-of-the-way villages, where the uncouthness and poverty of the people, and the dreary situation of their houses, horrible to behold from afar, high up amongst steep and rugged mountains, frightened away all other teachers. Often he was away from his monastery for weeks, or even a month, at a time, winning these neglected people to the way of life.

Such had been Cuthbert's life for many years when Eata transferred him to Lindisfarne, "that he might there also teach the rule of monastic perfection with the authority of a prior, and set it forth by a virtuous example."*

It was at Lindisfarne, after some years, that Cuthbert took the momentous step, which his age recognized as the highest type of devotion to Christ. Resigning his post

* Bright, tr. 273.

of prior, he became a hermit on the islet of Farne, to which Aidan had been wont to retire for prayer and meditation.

The place was quite destitute of water, corn, and trees, infested, it was believed, by evil spirits, and entirely unfit for human habitation; so that before he settled down Cuthbert told the brethren: "If by divine grace I can live there by the labour of my hands I shall stay, but if not I shall soon return to you."

With the help of the brethren a hut was built with a mound about it, containing an oratory and a cell. In the floor of this cell a pit was dug, and though the ground was hard and stony, the faith of the man of God was rewarded, for the next day it was full of water which never afterwards failed. The next venture was not so fortunate. Instruments of husbandry were left with him at his request, and corn, which he sowed at the usual time, but not even a blade appeared the following summer. Nothing daunted, when the brethren next visited him he asked for barley, which he sowed in the same place; and though it was too late in the season for any hope of success, a plentiful crop came up; and the man of God rejoiced, for he could now support himself by his own labour.

Thus did Cuthbert serve God for many years in solitude, with the mound about his hut so high that he could only see from it the heavens for which he thirsted so ardently. If Cuthbert the hermit does no appeal to us like Cuthbert the prior, it was otherwise with his countrymen. His call to the episcopate was caused by the immense impression produced by this solitary life.

The see of Hexham, to which he was originally appointed, reveals the archbishop making and unmaking bishops as seemed good to him. Eata, at the time of Wilfrid's exile, had been consecrated Bishop of Lindisfarne and Hexham; but when the three disputed sees were increased to five

Hexham had been split off from Lindisfarne. But the Bishop of Hexham then appointed had been lately deposed; and at a great synod held at Twyford, in the presence of

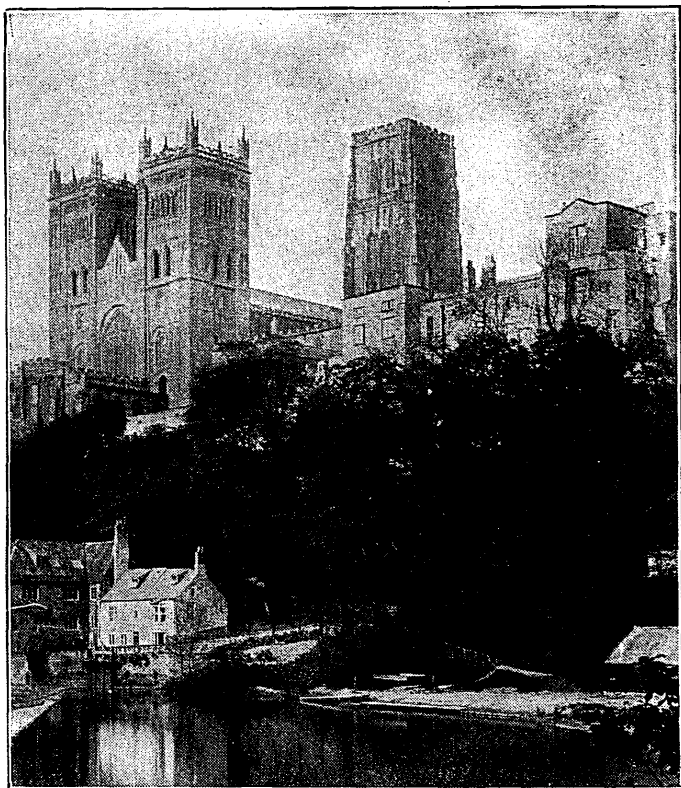


FIG. 24.—DURHAM CATHEDRAL.

[Photo by Valentine.]

King Egfrid, with Theodore as president, Cuthbert was unanimously chosen to the vacant post. Messengers and letters failed to move him from his retreat. At last the

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king himself and other religious and great men passed over to the island, with many of the brethren of Lindisfarne. They all knelt before him, and besought him with tears in God's name to yield; till they forced him, also in tears, to come to the synod. His reluctant consent to bow his neck to the yoke of the episcopate was at last granted, by reminding him that Boisil had prophetically foretold, amongst other things, that he should be a bishop. The winter had arrived during these protracted delays, and it was not till the following Easter, A.D. 685, that he was consecrated at York in the presence of King Egfrid, by seven bishops, with Theodore as primate. To make his task easier to him, Eata, the most meek and gentle of men, accepted once more the see of Hexham that Cuthbert might remain at Lindisfarne.

Cuthbert the bishop recalled Cuthbert the prior in his zeal for the diocese committed to his charge; but the asceticism for which he was so famous remained with him in his new office. The "grace of compunction" still kept him intent on holy things, and when he celebrated he commended his prayers to God not "with a loud voice, but with tears drawn from the bottom of his heart." This intense holiness might well have proved a barrier between him and his flock, if the first requirement of a teacher had not been so conspicuous in him; for he never asked anything to be done without first showing the way by doing it himself. Fervent before all things with the fire of divine love, patient, and humble-minded as well as pre-eminently a man of prayer, he was easy of access to all who came to him for comfort; for to him to aid the weak by his exhortations was as good as an act of prayer. He knew that He who said "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," said also "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

For two years he thus fulfilled the duties of a bishop, then warned by a divine oracle that the days of his death, or rather of that life which is the only true life, drew near, he sought once more his island and monastery. Very touching was his last interview with Herbert, the hermit priest of Derwent-water, who had been wont to visit him every year, and whose heart was knit with his in the bonds of spiritual friendship.

"Remember, brother Herbert," said the bishop, "that whatever you wish for you must ask for now, for we shall see each other no more in this world."

Brother Herbert had but one request to make, that they might depart together; and the bishop was able to assure him that it should be so. "Rise, my brother," he said after prayer; "do not

weep but rejoice, the divine goodness has granted what we longed for"; and so it came to pass, both died the same day.

It was at Farne, once more a hermit, that Cuthbert passed away in 687; leaving his see to be administered



FIG. 25.—S. CUTHBERT'S TOMB, DURHAM.

by Wilfrid for one year on his return from exile, pending the appointment of a new bishop.

At Farne also he had wished to be buried; but before



FIG. 26.—CARRYING S. CUTHBERT'S REMAINS.

the end he had yielded to the entreaties of the brethren, and was laid to rest in the church at Lindisfarne. Eleven years later the tomb was opened, and new vestments were provided

for the body; which was found whole and entire, more like one asleep than one so long dead. The remarkable wanderings of the relics of S. Cuthbert, which resulted in the foundation of Durham Cathedral for their shrine, belong to a later age; but long before they were commenced the fame of S. Cuthbert was assured, and his life written in prose and verse.

(c) MERCIA AND WESSEX

XXIX.—FURTHER CREATION OF SEES

(Bede, iii. 7; iv. 2, 3, 6, 12, 13; v. 18, 19. Eddi, 25)

Leaving Northumbria, let us now turn at last to the work of making smaller dioceses elsewhere. The single see of Lichfield, for the whole of Mercia, was at least as impossible to work as that of York in the golden days of its prince bishop; but nothing, so far as the scanty information available can tell us, offers a greater contrast than the increase in the number of bishops in these two rival kingdoms.

Winfrid, one of S. Chad's clergy, had been consecrated by Theodore in his place. He was a "good, and modest man," in no way sharing the fiery character of Wilfrid; yet, shortly after the Council of Hertford A.D. 673, he was deposed by Theodore for some "disobedience." This has been supposed to mean, that he resisted the enforcement of the ninth decree of the Council in the diocese which he had received intact as S. Chad had left it; in which case Winfrid, and not Wilfrid, was the original opponent to the archbishop's policy. Now it is known that Winfrid was travelling abroad at the time that Wilfrid crossed the sea to make his appeal; for many of his companions were slain and Winfrid himself cruelly ill-used, owing to a mistake in the identity of the two English bishops by the enemies of Wilfrid; whose friends rejoiced that, by "a good error," the rough handling intended for Wilfrid fell to the lot of the unfortunate Winfrid. If Winfrid, then, had some vague idea of pursuing the path which Wilfrid actually trod to

the bitter end, his misfortunes must have quenched his ardour; for he certainly resigned his see and settled down at his monastery of Barrow in Lincolnshire, where he ended his days, in "holy conversation." Practically, therefore, while Wilfrid opposed the archbishop to the utmost, Winfrid quietly retired and made no complaint.*

The see of Lichfield, thus made vacant between 673 and 675, gave Theodore his opportunity for dividing

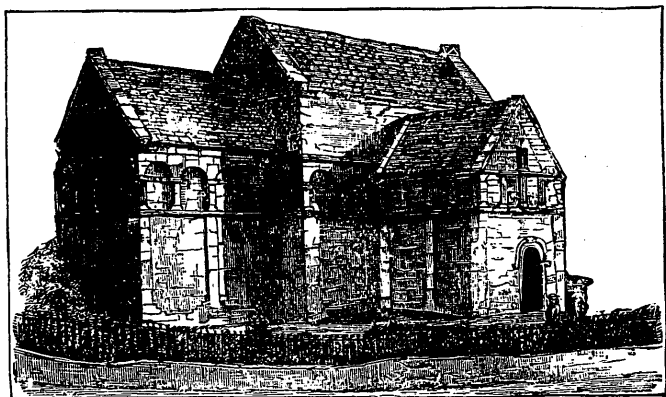


FIG. 27.—S. ADHELM'S CHURCH, BRADFORD-ON-AVON.

it; yet Saxulf was consecrated, in the room of Winfrid disgraced, to an undivided diocese. This sounds tame indeed, and represents a failure which the archbishop retrieved by other means. Soon, possibly immediately after Saxulf's appointment, Lincolnshire was cut off from Mercia; and Theodore, in conjunction with the victorious Egfrid, made the conquered territory into the third of the disputed sees which caused Wilfrid's appeal.

As regards Lincolnshire, therefore, war enabled Theodore

* For the name of Winfrid's monastery see Plummer, ii. 208.

to carry out the design which he had been unable to effect in peace; and war was to help him yet further. In 679, as we have already seen, Lincolnshire returned to Mercia; and not only was its newly made see retained, though with a new bishop, but this arrangement seems to have resulted in a yet further partition of this kingdom. At the request of King Ethelred, and doubtless with the full consent of Saxulf, three more dioceses were created in Mercia. Thus, if this fresh division was made in one year, Theodore's triumph in Northumbria, A.D. 678 was repeated in Mercia in 679; and to the five sees of Lichfield, Lindsey, Leicester, Worcester, and Dorchester,* yet another appears to have been added, to which a very picturesque bit of history is usually attached.

In 676 King Ethelred, the son of Penda, who died a monk in the odour of sanctity, ravaged Kent and laid waste churches and monasteries, without regard to piety or the fear of God. The tide of war must have swept close to Canterbury itself, and Rochester was reduced to a heap of ashes. Putta, its bishop, was absent at the time; but when he heard that his church had been stripped of all its property and lay desolate, he fled to Saxulf the bishop of this future monk who, though a Christian, so worthily followed in the footsteps of his father Penda. To Theodore Putta must have seemed a pitiful failure; but his flight was justified, for his successor was literally starved out. But the archbishop, nothing daunted, consecrated yet a third bishop to the plundered see.

Meanwhile Putta received from Saxulf the possession

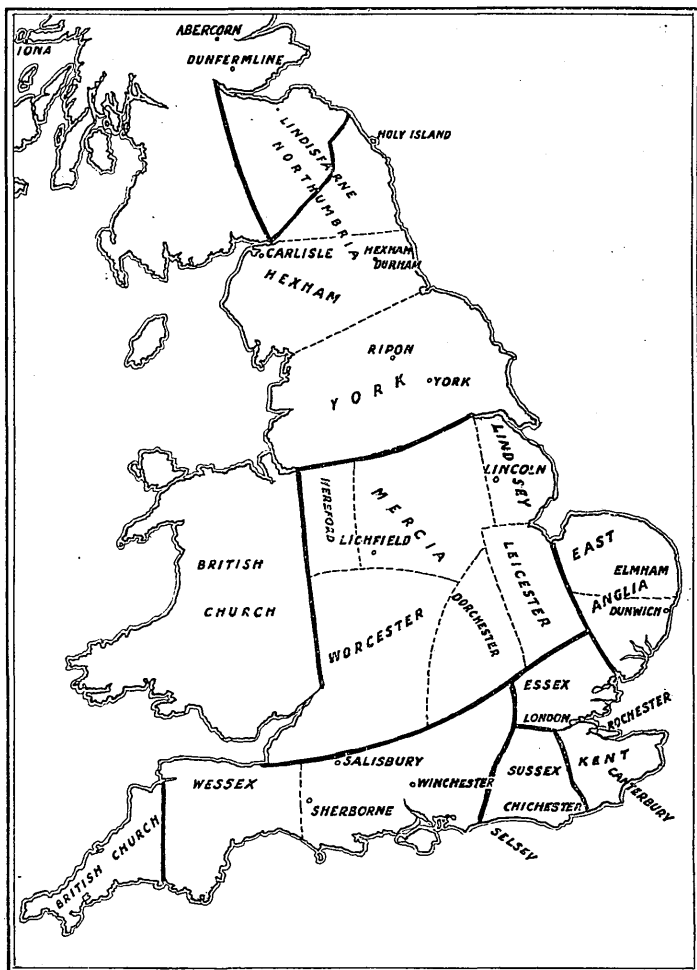
* Bede, iv. 23. Florence of Worcester, Appendix ad Chron. As Dorchester, one of the three new sees belonging to this date, originally formed the bishop's seat of Birinus the Apostle of Wessex, it must have become separated from that kingdom to be revived as a Mercian see; but the Mercian subdivision is "beset with extraordinary difficulties," and "there are no materials for forming an indisputable conclusion." Plummer, ii. 216; H. and S., iii. 129. See also Bright, 318-321.

of a certain church and a small plot of ground, in no way desiring to be restored to his see. A simple-minded man, and inapt for worldly affairs, he ended his days in peace, going about, when desired, to teach the Roman style of singing, in which he was extraordinarily skilful, having learnt it in Kent from the disciples of the blessed Pope Gregory.

If he added episcopal functions to these duties (which somewhat contradicts the account given of his retirement), he may well have become the first Bishop of Hereford, whose name was Putta,* but this is doubtful. At any rate Hereford formed yet a sixth see for Mercia by the time of Theodore's death, and Putta's flight gives yet another glimpse into the tremendous task which the Greek archbishop set before himself.

Leaving Mercia, we now turn to Wessex, the one kingdom of first-rate importance in which Theodore failed to accomplish any change; though it was also the only one in which an abortive attempt in this direction had been made before he came to England. It will be remembered how Kenwalch placed Wini at Winchester, leaving Agilbert at Dorchester, and how Agilbert indignantly retired; so that Dorchester remained deserted till it reappeared as a Mercian see. Even the sole see of Winchester came to an end when Wini was also expelled by Kenwalch, to become the episcopal black sheep in possession at London when Theodore arrived at Canterbury. This want of any bishop at all for Wessex was remedied before the Council of Hertford, for Theodore had consecrated Lothere at Winchester at the request of Kenwalch and his people, who received him with all honour. How completely this king had learnt to regret his conduct, in this as in other matters, is shown by the fact

* Florence of Worcester, Appendix ad Chron. A.D. 688. On this late authority chiefly depends our knowledge of the foundation of the Mercian sees.



DIOCESSES CIRCA A.D. 705.

that, made repentant by his disasters in war, he tried to induce Agilbert to return, and accepted Lothere his nephew instead, on his recommendation.

Lothere ruled the diocese "alone," and by "a synodal decree"; which seems to imply that there was a special arrangement in his case by which "the project of division" was abandoned for "the present."* However this may be, when Lothere died the completely disordered state of Wessex politically prevented Theodore from doing more than consecrating Heddi to the undivided diocese; which he still held when the great archbishop departed this life in 690. It was not till Heddi's death, about 705, that the partition of Wessex at last took place, when he was succeeded by Daniel at Winchester and the learned Aldhelm at Sherborne. As this change was in accordance with Theodore's wishes, though carried out fifteen years after his death, it may practically be attributed to him. Under Bishop Daniel, Selsey, the see founded by Wilfrid in his exile, was also revived, but it soon disappeared again for a long interval.†

This completes the account of Theodore's policy of organization, and the four lists on page 166 should give a key to its extent, and also its survival in modern times.

The first three lists show at a glance that the sees which Theodore found on his arrival, or which were created before his death, corresponded with the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. Abercorn, for instance, the fifth see in Northumbria, represented the extreme limits of Egfrid's conquests in the north, and disappeared with his defeat and death, which will be related in connection with Wilfrid's return from exile.

* Plummer, ii. 148.

† Bede, v. 18; Malmesbury, G.P., ii. 79.

(i.) Kingdoms.	(ii.) Sees in Existence before Theodore's Arrival.	(iii.) Founded before his Death.	(iv.) Modern Representatives.
Kent	Canterbury Rochester	Canterbury Rochester	Canterbury Rochester
Essex	London (a)	London	London
East Anglia	Dunwich	Dunwich	Norwich
		Elmham	
Northumbria	York (a)	York (b)	York
		Lindisfarne	Durham
		Lindsey	Lincoln
		Hexham (c)	
		Abercorn	Carlisle
		Ripon (?)	
Mercia	See unknown	Lichfield (d)	Lichfield
		Leicester	Worcester
		Worcester	
		Dorchester	
		Hereford	Hereford
Wessex	Dorchester or Winchester	Winchester	Winchester
Sussex	(Heathen) (7)	Sherborne (e) Selsey (f) (19)	Salisbury Chichester (14)

(a) London was occupied by Wini, and York by Chad, with Wilfrid as a rival claimant; and the remaining sees of list ii. were vacant when Theodore arrived at Canterbury.

(b) The three sees originally causing Wilfrid's appeal.

(c) The two formed during Wilfrid's exile.

(d) The sees formed for Mercia in 679, omitting Lindsey because originally assigned to Northumbria.

(e) Founded fifteen years after Theodore's death.

(f) Founded by Wilfrid in exile, and incorporated with Winchester on his return before Theodore's death, but revived under Bishop Daniel.

Again, of the nineteen sees in list iii., while Abercorn was lost altogether, Selsey was outside Theodore's jurisdiction during its brief existence in his lifetime, Sherborne was founded fifteen years after his death, and the Mercian sees offer many reasons for dispute. Still, with all these reservations, a comparison between lists iii. and iv. shows that Theodore built up a framework of the modern organization of the Church of England, and even "the

identical dioceses, with a few exceptions and subdivisions, that exist at this day.”*

It would have been interesting to have added yet a fifth list of the modern sees, but the Heptarchy no longer supplies a basis for the arrangement of dioceses. In addition to this, Wales, Cornwall, Devonshire, and a large portion of Somerset were, like heathen Sussex, outside Theodore’s jurisdiction, forming the precarious area of the hostile British Church with which he had no connection.

The England of to-day was, in fact, not the England of Theodore; and besides the surpassing difficulties which he had in consequence to overcome, he was himself a Greek, long past the prime of life, and alien in thought and civilization to the barbarous people and petty kings with whom he had to deal. Yet, with all these hindrances, he created an adequate episcopate for the Church of England, which has largely survived to our own day. It was a mighty task, its immense influence in Church and State cannot be estimated; and it gives to the archbishop who accomplished it an undying claim to reverence and admiration.

* H. and S., iii. 122.

PART IV.—CONCLUSION

XXX.—THEODORE THE PHILOSOPHER*

(Bede, iv. 2; v. 8, 20. "Theodore's Penitential" [see notes]. Eddi, 43)

The organization of the infant Church is not Theodore's only claim to grateful remembrance. There can be no doubt that in the Penitential which bears his name "we possess a collection of his decisions, drawn up possibly under his own superintendence." By these decisions Theodore has been considered to have left "in some ways a larger mark upon the Church of England and the Church of the West" than by his powers of organization. Let us glance at some of them.†

They tell us, for instance, how Theodore dealt with the hostile communion of the British Church which lay outside his jurisdiction. To this momentous subject a whole section is devoted, under the heading "Concerning the Communion of the Scots and Britons," etc.; and the first rule of this section runs: "Those who have been ordained by bishops of the Scots (the Irish are meant) or Britons, who are not Catholic in the matter of Pasch (*i.e.*, Easter) or tonsure, have not been united to the Church, but must be confirmed again by a Catholic bishop, by imposition of hands." This is a clear and unvarnished statement of the position of the British Church in Theodore's eyes; and it has been quoted as throwing light upon the case of S. Chad, the humble-minded prelate with whom the

* For this title see "Synodical Letter of the Pope and Roman Council of Bishops in 680," Haddan and Stubbs, iii. 140.

† Stubbs's art. Theodore of Tarsus, D.C.B., iv. 931. Browne's "Theodore and Wilfrith," 177.

archbishop was at first so rigorously stern, and then so delightfully unbending.*

In like manner, it was decided in this section that churches consecrated by bishops of the British Church and its communion must be sprinkled with holy water; and the Eucharist denied to its members, even if asked for, unless they had abjured their errors, and had been reconciled to the Catholic Church.†

These rules seem harsh and unbending, but they are by no means wanting in charity; and in a kindred matter the archbishop felt that he could afford to take a wider outlook. S. Aidan hailed from Iona, the famous monastery of the communion against which Theodore so resolutely set his face. As the result of his apostolic labours S. Aidan left behind him, notably at Whitby, monasteries of monks and nuns under a female head. The archbishop asserts sternly, "It is not lawful"; but then he adds, though as it were with a sigh, "Nevertheless, we do not destroy that which is the custom in this land."‡ It is a man large-minded beyond his age who meets us here.

Let us leave this dreary controversy with the British Church, which belongs, alas! to every stage of the conversion of the English. Far more delightful is the unconscious way in which Theodore reveals himself to us in his Penitential. A learned Greek, sent by the Head of the Latin Church to gather together in one the various missions to the English barbarians, his unique position is impressed upon us in the varied experience he brought to bear upon every difficulty.

Pope Innocent, he points out, by the authority of the canons would not admit a heretic to Holy Orders, even after

* "Theodore's Penitential," ii. ix, 1. Haddan and Stubbs, iii. 197. Bright, 237, 238, 450, 451.

† *Ibid.*, ii. ix, 2, 3. Haddan and Stubbs, iii. 197.

‡ *Ibid.*, ii. vi, 18. Haddan and Stubbs, iii. 195.

penance; but this decision Theodore set aside, on account of the "great necessity"* of a growing Church in a semi-heathen land. Nor is this the only instance in which Theodore believed himself to be revising the decisions of the Roman Pontiff, without apparently a single qualm of conscience in so doing.

Another way in which his learning is unconsciously brought out is in the frequent contrasts he points out between the Greeks and the Romans; urging the claims of neither.

The Greeks, it appears, communicated every Lord's Day, clergy and laity; and severe consequences followed for those who did not communicate for three Sundays; but the Romans communicated those who wished, and no notice was taken of those who did not wish to do so.†

Numerous instances of the divergence between the customs of the Greeks and Romans could be quoted; but sometimes their *resemblance* is insisted upon. One illustration must suffice. Both Greeks and Romans affirmed that the sufferers from the deadly pest must be visited as in more ordinary sickness, "as the Lord commands."‡

The relations of Church and State, most important at such an early stage, the custom of tithes, the suppression of idolatry, and many other matters are scattered over the two books of this Penitential; but we forbear. With regard to idolatry, however, it is surprising to notice that the eating of horseflesh was permitted, though with the proviso, "Nevertheless the custom is not to eat."§ Its association with heathen sacrifices might well have caused a different decision.

* "Theodore's Penitential," i. v, 2. Haddan and Stubbs, iii. 180-181.

† *Ibid.*, i. xii, 1, 2. Haddan and Stubbs, iii. 186.

‡ *Ibid.*, ii. viii, 6. Haddan and Stubbs, iii. 197.

§ *Ibid.*, ii. xi, 5. Haddan and Stubbs, iii. 198.

Besides the stores of wisdom and statesmanship revealed in his Penitential, Theodore's love of learning took a more direct form in the promotion of education, from the time he arrived in England till the day of his death. "It was owing to his influence that the Anglo-Saxon Church was a learned Church. His School at Canterbury was of the nature of a University, and we trace its influence direct to Jarrow and York."*

In spite of the heavy cares of Church and State, crowds of disciples were gathered together, with the aid of Hadrian, who long survived him. Nor were they disappointed. Their teachers were well read in sacred and profane literature, and rivers of knowledge daily flowed to water the minds of their pupils. Besides Holy Writ, they were taught the arts of metre, astronomy, and ecclesiastical arithmetic; the last for the calculation of Easter and other Church festivals. Many knew Latin and Greek as well as they knew their own tongue wherein they were born, as the result of the education they received at Canterbury. Some of the names of these disciples can be recovered. Of Albinus, the successor of Hadrian as abbot of S. Peter and S. Paul (now S. Augustine), who exercised so profound an influence on Bede's work as an historian, we are told that he knew Greek fairly, and Latin as thoroughly as his native English. Again, not as a pupil but as a friend, Bede's patron, Benedict Biscop, during part of his life was also in close intimacy with Theodore, who must have regarded with the warmest interest the homes of learning founded at Monkswearmouth and Jarrow. Through these channels the influence of his School at Canterbury spread to York, and from York by means of Alcuin, the great scholar of the next century, to the Continent.

Besides the studies above mentioned, "from that time"

* Browne, "Theodore and Wilfrith," 181.

(that is, from the arrival of Theodore) they began to learn the art of singing in church through all the Churches of the English, which up to that time was known only in Kent. Theodore, however, was not the first to introduce the Roman and Canterbury methods of singing in the north. The isolated efforts of James the Deacon already mentioned, and also Wilfrid's zeal in this direction, with the aid of his choirmaster Eddi, must not be forgotten.*

As in his Penitential, so with education, the work of Theodore the Philosopher, as he was called from his great learning of world-wide fame, was of more than national importance. "It is difficult, if not impossible, to overstate the debt which England, Europe, and Christian civilization owes to the work of Theodore."† So writes the late Bishop Stubbs in modern times. Or turning to Bede, whose life was but begun when Theodore was called to his rest, he thus records his grateful thanks in his account of Theodore as a teacher: "Nor have there ever been happier times, since the English conquered Britain, in which they had brave and Christian kings who were a terror to all barbarian nations; and the minds of all were bent upon the joys of the heavenly kingdom so lately heard among them, and those who desired to be taught in the sacred writings had teachers at hand to teach them."

It was a splendid achievement in organization, discipline, and education, that the aged archbishop, already old when he reached these shores, had to look back upon. One blot alone defaced it, the struggle with Wilfrid; and this, four years before his death, he was able to remove. With Egfrid's defeat, paid for with his life, to which we turn in the next chapter, a new king was called to the throne of

* Bede, iv. 2. The Gregorian chant is meant.

† Stubbs's art. Theodore of Tarsus, D.C.B., iv. 932.

Northumbria. It was Theodore's opportunity; and worn out with increasing infirmities, the imperious old man was the more willing to make use of it. By his invitation Wilfrid met him at London in the presence of its bishop, Erkenwald, and they were reconciled; with the result that Wilfrid at last returned home from his honourable exile in Sussex.*

In 690, at the ripe age of eighty-eight, to which he was wont to tell his friends he should attain, for it had been revealed to him in a dream, Theodore passed away after holding his see twenty-one years. No miracles were wrought at his tomb, no devoted admirer wrote his life, as in the case of S. Cuthbert or S. Wilfrid; and while we speak of the first two of the three founders of the Church of England as S. Augustine and S. Aidan, we are content to describe the third as archbishop, not S. Theodore. Yet the sacrifices he made for English Christianity were greater than those of the Apostle of Kent or the Apostle of the North; for he was a noted scholar long before his appearance in England, and his labours in his adopted land were of European as well as of national importance. Moreover, out of the rival missions he found on his arrival he built up one Church, which became a model to the petty kingdoms to which it ministered, insensibly moulding them into one State; so that it is not too much to say, that in the foundation of the Church of England the foundations were also laid of the mighty British Empire to which we belong. It is strange to have to add, that the services of Archbishop Theodore, alike to Church and State, have been tacitly ignored.

Two stanzas, the first and the last, of the epitaph upon his tomb have been preserved to us by Bede; but his

* Eddi, 43. The text is a very brief summary of his account of the interview.

“simple testimony”* surpasses both. “During the time of his episcopate the Churches of the English gained such an amount of spiritual benefit as they had never before received.”

* Bright, 372.

XXXI.—WILFRID'S SECOND EXILE AND DEATH

(Bede, iii. 13; iv. 26, 29; v. 2, 3, 19. Bede, *Vita Cuthberti*, 27.
Eddi, 44-47, 50-54, 60)

By Egfrid's death Wilfrid's restoration to his native land in 686 was made possible, and his sovereign's mournful end may well have caused him serious reflection. The accounts preserved to us are full of the shock it caused. Men remembered how cruelly his general, Beort, had laid waste Ireland the year before, and the curses of its afflicted people. These curses seemed fulfilled when the infatuated king proceeded in person to harry the Picts against the advice of his friends, and especially Cuthbert of blessed memory. Lured among the mountains, he perished with the flower of his army, at Dunnechtan in 685.*

While news was still awaited of victory or defeat, S. Cuthbert was standing by the Roman fountain at Carlisle; admiring, at the invitation of its citizens, its wonderful workmanship. Suddenly the saint leaning on his staff bent gloomily to earth, and again lifting his eyes to heaven he groaned deeply as he murmured, "Perchance the issue is even now decided." What did he mean? He refused to explain, though the following Sunday he urged upon the brethren, to whom he preached, to watch in prayer that tribulation might find them prepared. These words were recalled when the dreadful disaster became known. Might not that fatal day have been averted, if Wilfrid had been at Egfrid's side instead of far away in exile? We can but ask the question, remembering that with the battle of Dunnechtan the supremacy of Northumbria passed away;

* Bede, iv. 26. *Tigernachi Annales*. See also Bright, 344, and notes.

and that her glory as the chief means in the conversion of the English has become wellnigh forgotten in the rise of Wessex, from whose royal house our present king is lineally descended.

And if it was to a changed Northumbria that Wilfrid returned, so was it as regards his see of York, which he had occupied with so much brilliancy and success. It was this diocese as reduced by Theodore and the fortune of war, that he was forced to accept. It is true, that he probably took charge of Hexham for a time, pending a new appointment after the death of Eata; and he certainly administered Lindisfarne in this way on S. Cuthbert's death, shortly after his return; but this was a mere matter of convenience. New bishops were soon appointed to these two sees which had been carved out of the original diocese of York; and all that was ultimately allowed to Wilfrid was that Bosa should make room for him at York, while Eadhed retired from Ripon, which was restored to its founder.*

Wilfrid was not content. It was a grievance to him that he had not received back as much of his property as he had expected;† and above all that the decrees of Theodore—i.e., the division of his original diocese of York without his consent—were kept. For this reason the relations of the returned exile with the new king were unhappy from the first; for King Aldfrid was resolute that the decrees should be frankly accepted. Sometimes the two were friends, sometimes they quarrelled bitterly; and a thoroughly hopeless state of things came to an end when Wilfrid, expelled by Aldfrid from York, retired to Mercia.

This solution of the problem was felt to be most unsatisfactory, and a Council was called by King Aldfrid, in the name of the whole English Church, to consider Wilfrid's

* See Plummer, ii. 274, 326; Bright, 362, 363, on the difficulties presented by the authorities. Bede, iv. 29; v. 2. Eddi, 44.

† There are difficulties about the property mentioned. Eddi, 45.

case, which met at Easterfield, "somewhere in Yorkshire, perhaps at Austerfield near Bawtry," in 702.* The new archbishop, Bertwald, was present with nearly all his bishops. It is on his appointment, as the successor of Theodore in the archbishopric, that the sturdy national pride bursts forth in the striking comment passed upon it in the Saxon Chronicle: "Before this, the bishops had been Romans, but from this time they were English";† and though of a later date, it is significant when we turn to what happened at Easterfield, where the decrees of Theodore were presented for Wilfrid's acceptance with no further hope that they would be reconsidered. This meant giving up the decision of the Pope in his favour, and Wilfrid tried to escape a definite reply. "Saving the honour of my order," he might have cried with S. Thomas of Canterbury in a later age.‡ So the melancholy close was reached. After much controversy, and some proposals to reduce him to reason by force which were wisely rejected, Wilfrid again appealed to Rome in a long speech in which he complained bitterly of the treatment he had received, after being a bishop for nearly forty years. After hearing him out the king and archbishop said: "He is the more blameable, knowing that we have decided against him, in that he has chosen to be judged at Rome rather than by us." It was, in fact, the national independence which was at stake, in the opinion of the chief authorities in Church and State.

So Wilfrid once more started upon his travels. The journey was made by the vigorous old man on foot, and on his way he visited the mission-field in Frisia which he had founded, in a like journey, some twenty-five years before.

* Bright, 403; Haddan and Stubbs, iii. 254. For the date see Plummer, ii. 319, 320.

† Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 690, Giles tr.

‡ Green, "Short History of the English People," i. 204. See Bright, 404.

At Rome four months were spent, and no less than seventy sittings held, to pronounce a decision in Wilfrid's favour. The close of the proceedings was marked by a dramatic incident, by reading the record of the Council which was sitting during Wilfrid's first appeal, and at which he had been so honourably asked to take a seat. When the reader came to the place where it was written, "Wilfrid, beloved of God, bishop of the city of York, being acquitted after his appeal to the Apostolic See," everyone was amazed. "Who is this Wilfrid?" it was asked. Then Boniface, the counsellor of the Pope, and many others who had known him on the earlier occasion, declared that it was the same Wilfrid who had already been at Rome on the same matter for which he was now present, and had been declared by the then Pope to have been wrongfully expelled from his bishopric. The former acquittal was then reaffirmed, and the Pope undertook to write to the kings, Ethelred of Mercia and Aldfrid of Northumbria, on Wilfrid's behalf. This letter, as explained later on by Archbishop Bertwald with a surprisingly frank comment on the obscurity of the papal style, virtually amounted to this: that the cause of Wilfrid must be decided at home, one way or other, or else referred to Rome for settlement.

Thus, once more Wilfrid triumphed, but it was no longer with exultation that the old man returned home. Dire forebodings of the result may well have caused his illness, during the long journey. Unable to ride, he was carried in a litter, and becoming worse for four days and nights he lay as one dead. Awakening from his trance he summoned Acca, the priest, from among his sorrowing attendants, and to him alone he told the vision he had seen. Michael the archangel had appeared to him and bade him be of good cheer, for he should recover most of his possessions and end his days in peace.

On his arrival in Britain Bertwald, the archbishop, willingly received him, but King Aldfrid refused to have anything to do with him. The king died shortly afterwards, however, and under his successor Wilfrid returned to Northumbria, but not to York. After a Council near the River Nidd, at which disputes burst forth afresh, he received the see of Hexham, and its bishop, the famous John of Beverley, was translated to York, vacant by the death of Bosa about this time. The final result of Wilfrid's appeals was thus the more marked. He had started as the sole bishop in Northumbria. He had returned from his first appeal to the diminished bishopric of York. The second appeal followed, and though his restoration to York would have been easy, he ended his days at Hexham. All his domains were, however, restored to him, and it was while visiting his monastery of Oundle, in Mercia, that he died four years later, and was buried in the beloved church which he had built at Ripon in 709.

So closed the famous Cause of Wilfrid. Though the decrees of Rome were virtually treated as "so much waste paper,"* his right to appeal was never denied; and thus a precedent was formed "which might, under favourable auspices, be productive of greater things hereafter."† But, even when this is acknowledged, it is indeed surprising that at so early a date the temper of the English race should have declared itself so strongly, in clergy as well as laity. "Wilfrid's zeal for Rome made Egfrid the first defender of the national principle in the English Church. We may call him indeed the first Protestant."‡ It is this foretaste of the future which lends an interest which would otherwise be wanting to a wearisome dispute. While Theodore, out of scattered missions, was providing the Church of England

* Browne, "Theodore and Wilfrith," 229.

† Bright, 425.

‡ Raine, "Historians of the Church of York," i. xxviii (Preface).

with an organization which has largely survived to our own day, it was Wilfrid's unwelcome task to foreshadow, at its very commencement, its struggle with the court of Rome, which ended at the Reformation in complete separation.

But S. Wilfrid was greater than the Cause on which he had set his heart, and we must not overlook the loftiness of soul with which he turned even adversity to account. It made him the Apostle of Sussex and the founder of the first mission-field of the infant Church. Nay, more, it redeemed his Cause from any charge of selfish ambition, and placed him in the first rank as a lover of souls, in good report and evil report promoting Christ's Kingdom among men.

APPENDIX

(Bede, v. 24, Conclusion. Bede, Hist. Abbatum, 7, 8. Anon., Hist. Abbatum, 11, 12, 14. Alcuin, Ep. 16, 19. Cuthbert, De Obitu Bædæ)

It is possibly, to some of its members of the present day, an unexpected feature of the beginnings of the English Church that all its founders were monks. We are so familiar with the ruins of their former homes that we are apt to forget that, before it reached the decay which awaits all things earthly, monasticism had its prime of strength and vigour; and that it was a glorious prime is nowhere more clearly shown than in the foundation of the Church of England.

The preaching of the Gospel by monks had one great advantage. It provided an object-lesson easily understood of the meaning of the new religion. Without their walls perpetual wars and strife prevailed; within were men bound together in bonds of mutual peace and goodwill. It is expressly told us of S. Augustine and his companions, that the first English converts were as much won by the innocence of their lives as by the sweetness of their heavenly doctrine; and as it was at Canterbury so was it elsewhere. So great was the enthusiasm, that kings frequently resigned their crowns for the cloister, that they might the more easily practise the faith they had adopted; and as time went on the number of those who took vows became an increasing source of danger to the State.

It was a still more serious drawback that "the religious" inevitably came to mean monks and nuns; and thus a slur was cast upon the normal life of men. Kenwalch, the restless King of Wessex, was won to Christianity by his

sojourn with Anna and his saintly family; but the impression produced becomes somewhat qualified when we remember that most of Anna's children took vows, and one of their number, Queen Etheldreda, twice repudiated the marriage state. Still, with all these defects, to the self-denying lives of these monks and nuns must be traced the speedy conversion of the English to the religion of the race they had dispossessed.

And if these homes of piety formed an object-lesson of the new faith, they also provided so many sheltered spots where the seeds of culture could take root and grow in that rude and barbarous age. S. Cedd designedly chose the wildest spot he could find for his monastery of Lastingham, but we may be sure that it soon changed its aspect; for husbandry owes much to monks, and so do other arts of life. Pioneers of civilization, as well as preachers of religion, the first use of stone and glass in England is directly traced to them; and their efforts on behalf of education were untiring. All this should have been made clear to the readers of these pages, but some account of monastic life from within, as well as from without, should be of interest; and it may well be associated with the great monk-scholar, to whose "Ecclesiastical History" we owe practically all our knowledge of the first days of English Christianity.

Bede himself tells us that he was born, in A.D. 673, upon territory afterwards assigned to the twin monasteries of Monkswearmouth and Jarrow; and that at the age of seven he was given by his parents to the most revered Abbot Benedict, to be brought up as a monk. This was in A.D. 680, but the next year the child formed one of the twelve untensured inmates of Wearmouth who, together with ten monks, accompanied Ceolfrid to the new foundation of Jarrow; and there the rest of Bede's quiet and uneventful life was spent. Only the most necessary buildings were

in existence when they arrived; but the regular discipline was at once begun, with every canonical rite of singing and reading, though by no means all knew how to take their part. But the love of religion and the example of their zealous ruler worked wonders; and there would be no more apt or willing pupil than Bede in the monastic school, which was doubtless at once set going in spite of difficulties so great, that it was not till the third year after their arrival that the building of S. Paul's Church, Jar-row, was begun. Part of this church still stands with its dedication stone in position, and Bede must have taken part in the opening services about a year later.* The daily round of prayer and praise was, however, soon interrupted by the advent of the plague; and of this a well-known story is told.

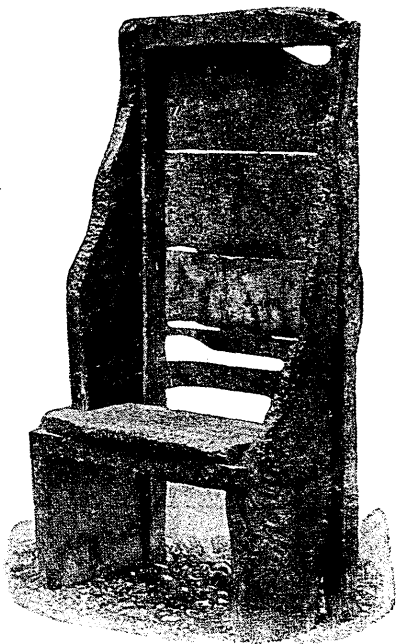


FIG. 28.—BEDE'S CHAIR (REPUTED).

All who could read or preach or say the antiphons and responses were cut off save the abbot and one little boy, who had been nourished and taught by him, and who lived to become a priest in the same monastery. Sad at heart, Ceolfrid ordained that, except at vespers and matins, the

* For the inscription on the dedication stone see Plummer, ii. 361.

Psalms should be recited without antiphons. This was done for a whole week, amidst the tears and lamentations of the abbot; when the usual order was restored, though with much labour, by Ceolfrid with the aid of the boy already mentioned.

This little boy could have been none other than Bede himself, and the fact that the plague could only impair but could not stay the daily round of prayer and praise, which had been begun before a single stone of the church had been laid, is in itself significant. Convent life centred round the seven canonical services, which began soon after midnight, and continued every three hours throughout the day, till late into the evening. At these services no more reverent worshipper than Bede could have been found in any age, and of this a charming anecdote is preserved in which he is reported to have said: "I know that angels visit the canonical hours. What if they do not find me there? Will they not say, Where is Bede?" The stately church with its surrounding buildings in stone, the pictures which adorned the sanctuary, the treasured library of books, would all exert their fullest influence upon a mind so naturally pious as his. Lads on the foundation of a later generation were exhorted by his example to be diligent in study and in the praise of the heavenly King, and not to spend their time in digging out foxes or coursing hares.

But of Bede's life, spent in one single monastery, we have the priceless advantage of his own personal description. "I have given all pains to the study of the Scriptures; and in the observance of regular discipline and the daily charge of singing in church. I have ever found it sweet to learn or to teach or to write." And he further adds that the quiet monotony of his days, "joined each to each, by natural piety," was broken by his ordination to the diaconate in his nineteenth, and to the priesthood in his

thirtieth year; both through the ministry of the most reverend Bishop John (of Hexham), and at the wish of the abbot Ceolfrid.

One important part of a monk's duties is omitted in Bede's description of his monastic life. All the domestic work of the establishment was done by the monks themselves. Ceolfrid, as already mentioned, had been a baker during part of his career, so was it with Easterwine, his fellow-abbot at Wearmouth. A cousin of Benedict, the founder of the twin monastery, he delighted when he took vows, on giving up the king's service, to mow, to thresh, to milk, and to take his part in all the labour of the monastery. Even when he became an abbot he would take a hand at the plough or whatever else might be going forward, when opportunity served, and his pleasant voice and ringing laugh and cheerful face made him welcome everywhere.

Bede, who gives us a delightful sketch of Easterwine from which these particulars are taken, could have had no sympathy with those who speak of manual toil as menial drudgery; but it must have been early recognized that the bent of his mind called him to other tasks than these. His part in the community was that of a teacher in the monastic school, where he had once been a pupil, and whatever time he could spare from the school and the services was devoted to writing and study. These duties did not leave him long to himself, yet his other labours were prodigious; and though it is chiefly by his "Ecclesiastical History" that he is so gratefully remembered, his extant writings have been divided into three classes—"scientific, historical, and theological."* His immense learning gave him a position which this humble-minded monk had never sought for himself, and his letter to Egbert, Bishop, and afterwards Archbishop of York, is full of practical comments on the evils

* Plummer, Introduction, i. xxxvii.

of the time and their remedies. The letter is the more interesting, since it adds as it were another chapter to his "History," recording the sad fact that the Church which he loved and served so well had outlived its first glory; and that even in the homes of piety which had filled so great a part in its foundation serious evils were rife, threatening the spiritual welfare of the Church.

However it may have been with others, in Bede's person all the holiest virtues of the first days survived, and the account of his death, given to us by an eye-witness, is as beautiful as any of those which he has himself recorded.

"For about two weeks before Easter he was troubled with weakness, and especially with difficulty of breathing, yet without much actual pain. And after that he continued until Ascension Day cheerful and rejoicing and giving thanks to Almighty God every day and night, yea every hour. . . . I can with truth declare that I never saw with my eyes, or heard with my ears, anyone return thanks so unceasingly to the living God. O truly blessed man! He would recite the saying of the holy Apostle Paul: 'It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God'; and many other things out of Holy Scripture, in which he warned us to arise from the sleep of the soul, by thinking beforehand of our last hour. And in our own tongue also (for he was skilled in our native songs), speaking of the dread departure of the soul from the body, he sang:

"Ere that forced journey, no one may be
More prudent, than him well beseemeth,
If he but meditate, ere his departure,
What to his spirit, of good or evil,
After his death-day, may be decreed."

. . . In those days, moreover, besides the lessons which he gave us daily, and the chanting of the Psalms, there were

two works, very worthy of mention, which he laboured to complete; that is translated into our language, for the profit of the Church of God, from the beginning of S. John's Gospel to the place where it is said: 'but what are they

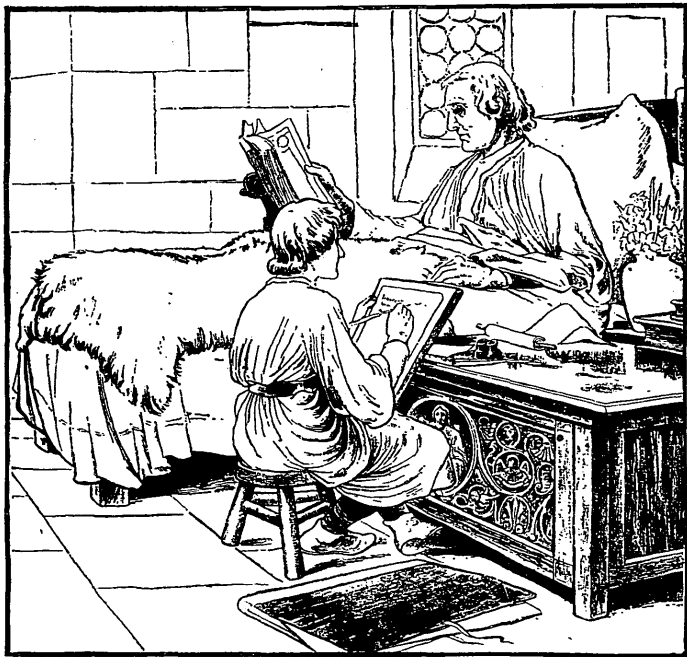


FIG. 29.—BEDE TRANSLATING S. JOHN'S GOSPEL.

among so many ?' And some extracts from the works of Bishop Isidore, for he said: 'I would not that my children should read a lie, and labour herein without fruit after I am gone.'

"But when the Tuesday before Ascension Day arrived,

his breathing became much more difficult, and his feet began to swell slightly. But all that day he taught and dictated cheerfully, and among other things he would say from time to time: 'Learn speedily; I know not how long I shall be with you, or whether my Maker will remove me shortly.' We, however, wondered whether perchance he did not well know the time of his departure; and thus in giving of thanks he wakefully passed the night.

"And when the morning broke—that is, the Wednesday—he bade us write diligently what we had begun, and this we did up to the third hour. But from the third hour we walked in procession with the relics of the saints, as the custom of that day required (*i.e.*, the Rogation Days). One, however, of us remained with him, who said: 'There is still one chapter wanting of the book which thou has been dictating, and it seems hard for thee to be questioned further.' 'Nay,' said he, 'it is easy; take thy pen and mend it and write quickly'; and he did so. But at the ninth hour he said to me: 'I have a few treasures in my casket—that is, some pepper, napkins, and incense; but run quickly and call the priests of our monastery to me, that I may distribute to them such gifts as God has given me.' And in great agitation I did so. And he addressed them generally and severally, exhorting and beseeching them diligently to offer Masses and prayers for him, which they gladly promised. And they all wept and lamented, sorrowing most of all because he said that they must not reckon to see his face much longer in this world, but rejoicing because he said: 'It is time for me, if it be His will, to return to my Maker, who formed me, when as yet I was not, out of nothing. I have lived long, and my merciful Judge has well disposed my life. The time of my departure is at hand, for my soul desires to see Christ my King in His beauty.' This, and many like things he said, and passed the day in gladness

until evening. Then the same boy, named Wilbert, said once more: 'There is still one sentence, dear master, which is not written down.' And he said; 'Well then, write it.' And after a little space the boy said: 'Now it is finished.' And he answered: 'Well thou hast spoken truth; it is finished. Take my head in thy hands, for it much delights me to sit opposite my holy place where I used to pray, that so sitting I may call upon my Father.' And thus upon the floor of his cell singing, 'Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost,' and the rest he breathed his latest breath. . . ."

Bede died on the eve of Ascension Day, A.D. 735,[†] and before the century had closed the invasions of the Danes had begun, by which so much that he loved and revered was swept away by fire and sword; and it seemed as if Christianity and civilization in England were being ruthlessly destroyed. It is well known that the tide was turned by the victories of Alfred the Great, but it should be also remembered that the zeal for learning and religion which is associated with his name to his imperishable glory was inspired by the mighty past, which he laboured so much to restore. So is it with ourselves. "The glory of children are their fathers," and it can but be an inspiration to us to recall these first days of English Christianity. Even the unfortunate hostility between the British Church and the "Churches of the English" has its meaning for us, in the divided state of the national religion in our own day. But there is abundant cause for thankfulness as well as heedful thought. In zeal for the Holy Scriptures, so often

* Account of Bede's death by Cuthbert, "afterwards Abbot of Wearmouth and Jarrow." Plummer's tr. He gives the whole in English as well as the actual text. Introduction i. lxxii-lxxviii. Appendix II. to Introduction, Part I., i. clx-clxiv.

† There is some difficulty about this date. Plummer, note Introduction, i. lxxi.

translated into English since Bede led the way ; in reverence for all that ministers to the beauty and dignity of the services of the sanctuary ; but above all in devotion to God and His Christ, the Church of England treasures the splendid story of its foundation, as a most precious inheritance, a perpetual call to thankfulness and praise.

LIST OF DATES

	A.D.
Martyrdom of S. Alban	304
Arrival of S. Augustine. Ethelbert baptized ..	597
The Canterbury Mission reinforced by Justus, etc. ..	601
Conference at Augustine's Oak	602, 603
Sees of London and Rochester founded	604
Laurence consecrated. Death of S. Augustine ..	605
Death of Ethelbert. Mellitus driven from London ..	616
Mellitus succeeds Laurence as archbishop	619
Justus succeeds Mellitus as archbishop	624
S. Paulinus sent to Northumbria	625
Edwin baptized	627
S. Felix in East Anglia. Archbishop Honorius at Canterbury	631
Battle of Hatfield. Death of Edwin. Flight of S. Paulinus	633
Battle of Heavenfield. S. Oswald king. S. Birinus in Wessex	634
S. Aidan at Lindisfarne	635
Battle of Maserfield	642
Ithamar the first native bishop consecrated to Rochester	644
Death of S. Aidan	651
Mission in Mercia. Second mission in Essex ..	653
Death of Archbishop Honorius	653
Deusdedit the first native archbishop succeeds Hon- orius	655
Battle of Winwidfield	655

	A.D.
Council at Whitby. The great plague. Death of Archbishop Deusdedit	664
Third mission in Essex	665
Consecration of Archbishop Theodore	668
Theodore's arrival at Canterbury. Wilfrid Bishop of York. Chad Bishop of Lichfield	669
Council of Hertford. Birth of Bede	673
Benedict Biscop founds S. Peter's, Monkswearmouth	674
Division of Mercian diocese about	679
Council of Hatfield. Wilfrid in prison	680
Wilfrid in exile. Conversion of heathen Sussex ..	681
S. Cuthbert Bishop of Lindisfarne. Battle of Dun- nechtan	685
Wilfrid's return from exile	686
Death of Archbishop Theodore	690
Wilfrid's second appeal	702
Death of S. Wilfrid	709

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INDEX

- ABB's, S., Head, 97
 Abercorn, see of, 124, 164, 165
 Acca, priest, 178
 Adestancastre (Adescanastre), 137
 Africa, 102
 Agilbert, Bishop, 68, 112, 119, 164
 Aidan, S., 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61,
 63, 69, 70, 71, 72, 74, 75, 82, 84,
 87, 88, 91, 92, 100, 102, 105, 107,
 117, 124, 129, 131, 152, 154, 169,
 173, 191
 Alban, S., 1, 2, 3, 191
 Albinus, Abbot, 171
 Alchfrid, sub-king, 80, 85, 86, 119
 Alcuin, 171
 Aldfrid, King, 176, 178, 179
 Aldhelm, S., Bishop, 164
 Alfred the Great, 189
 Alfwin, Prince, 125, 143, 149
 Alps, The, 122
 Andrew's, S., Abbey. *See* Rome
 Anglia, East, kingdom, 31, 45, 62,
 65, 67, 79, 81, 82, 105, 165, 191
 Anna, King, 64, 79, 80, 82, 182
 Arles, 15
 Audrey. *See* Etheldreda, Queen
 Augustine, S., Archbishop, 1, 7, 8,
 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18,
 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27,
 28, 29, 42, 43, 45, 47, 48, 59, 65,
 66, 82, 100, 102, 111, 118, 131,
 141, 173, 181, 191
 Augustine's, S., Abbey. *See* Can-
 terbury
 Augustine's Oak, 19, 191
 Austerfield, 177

 BALDUR, 51
 Bamborough Castle, 57, 61, 63, 67,
 69, 72
 Bamborough, S. Peter's Church,
 61
 Bangor, 22, 23
 Bardney Abbey, 67
 Barking Nunnery, 115, 116
 Barrow Abbey, 161
 Bawtry, 177
 Bede, the Venerable, vii, viii, 23,
 149, 171, 172, 173, 182, 183,
 184, 185, 186, 189, 192
 Benedict, S., Rule of, 120
 Benedict Biscop, S., Abbot, 118,
 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 152,
 171, 182, 185, 192
 Beort, general, 175
 Bernicia, 58, 70
 Bertha, Queen, 7, 9
 Bertwald, Archbishop, 177, 178,
 179
 Berwick, 97
 Beverley, John of, 179
 Bifrost, 49
 Birinus, S., Bishop, 66, 79, 82, 84,
 86, 131, 162, 191
 Bisi, Bishop, 112, 114
 Blœcca, Prefect, 44
 Boisil, Prior, 152, 156
 Boniface, Archdeacon, 118
 Boniface, counsellor, 178
 Boniface, S. (Winfrid), 137
 Boructuarians (Bructerians), 136
 Bosa, Bishop, 124, 176, 179
 Bosham, 132, 134
 Bradwell-on-Sea, 77
 Brie monastery, 82
 Britain, 4, 18, 32, 59, 91, 100, 119,
 130, 134, 144, 145, 172, 179
 British bishops, 18, 19, 21, 23
 British Church, 2, 18, 23, 55, 82,
 166, 167, 169, 189
 British Empire, 102, 137, 173

 CADWALLA, King (Wessex), 140,
 141

- Cadwallon (Cadwalla), British king, 46, 52, 54
 Cædmon, herdsman and poet, 93, 95, 96
 Cambridge, 128
 Canterbury (city and see), 9, 12, 16, 23, 24, 25, 27, 29, 44, 45, 46, 54, 82, 84, 100, 102, 104, 111, 112, 136, 145, 162, 163, 165, 171, 172, 181, 191, 192
 Canterbury Cathedral (Christ Church), 17, 46
 Canterbury, S. Martin's Church, 9, 12
 Canterbury, S. Pancras' Church, 16
 Canterbury, S. Peter's and S. Paul's Abbey (S. Augustine's), 25, 27, 145, 192
 Canterbury, school at, 171
 Carlisle, city and see, 165, 175
 Catterick, 43
 Cedd, S., Bishop, 76, 77, 79, 87, 99, 104, 105, 112, 115, 182
 Ceolfrið, Abbot, 146, 147, 148, 149, 152, 182, 183, 184, 185
 Chad, S., Bishop, 63, 78, 81, 104, 105, 107, 108, 112, 114, 119, 120, 144, 160, 165, 167, 192
 Chertsey Abbey, 115
 Chester, 22
 Cheviots, 42
 Chichester, see of, 141, 165
 Clement, S. See Willibrord
 Clovesho, Council of, 4
 Coifi, heathen priest, 40, 41
 Coldingham nunnery, 97, 126
 Colman, Bishop, 86, 87, 89, 91, 104
 Cologne, 137
 Columba, S., 55, 86, 135
 Constantinople, Sixth General Council, 144
 Cornwall, 166
 Cuthbert, S., bishop, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 159, 173, 175, 176, 192
 DAGAN, 23
 Danes, the, 189
 Daniel, Bishop, 164, 165
 Deira, 6, 31, 43, 58, 70, 72, 76, 80
 Denisburn, 54
 Derwentwater, 157
 Devonshire, 166
 Deusdedit, Archbishop, 65, 100, 191
 Dicul, Abbot, 132
 Dorchester, see of, 66, 86, 162, 163, 165
 Drythelm, monk, 150
 Dunnechtan, battle of, 175, 192
 Dunwich, see of, 64, 114, 165
 Durham, Cathedral and see of, 159, 165
 EADBALD, 26, 28, 29, 31, 65
 Eadgith, the nun, 115
 Eadhed, Bishop, 124, 143, 176
 Eanflæd, Queen, 37, 84, 88, 117, 118
 Eappa, priest, 139
 Easter, the Catholic, 19, 23, 55, 84, 85, 86, 88, 89, 100, 102, 113, 118, 135, 167, 171
 Easterfield, Council of, 177
 Easterwine, Abbot, 185
 Eata, Bishop, 63, 87, 124, 152, 154, 156, 176
 Ebba, S., Abbess, 97, 98, 126
 Ebbesfleet, 9
 Eddi, 122, 172
 Edinburgh (Edwin's burgh), 42
 Edmundsbury, S., and Ipswich, 114
 Edwin, King, 29, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 37, 39, 40, 41, 42, 44, 45, 46, 48, 52, 59, 63, 67, 70, 71, 79, 80, 84, 91, 121
 Egbert, Archbishop, 185
 Egbert, priest, 134, 135
 Egfrid, King, 123, 124, 125, 126, 138, 141, 143, 145, 147, 148, 152, 155, 156, 161, 164, 172, 175, 179
 Egrie, King, 80
 Ella, King, 6, 31, 43
 Elmham, see of, 114, 165
 Ely Abbey, 83, 126
 England, 1, 4, 7, 15, 42, 47, 59, 74, 82, 102, 104, 111, 119, 120, 130, 131, 141, 144, 145, 147, 163, 166, 171, 172, 173, 189
 England, Church of, 2, 9, 23, 26, 73, 102, 111, 130, 134, 165, 166, 167, 173, 179, 181, 190

Eorwald, 45
 Erconbert, 65, 83, 100, 117
 Ercongota, the nun, 83
 Erkenwald, S., Bishop, 112, 114, 115, 173
 Esica, 115
 Essex, kingdom (East Saxons, kingdom of), 24, 27, 28, 46, 74, 75, 77, 79, 99, 102, 165, 191, 192
 Ethelberga, Abbess, 83
 Ethelbert, King, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17, 18, 19, 24, 26, 27, 31, 48, 59, 66, 191
 Ethelburga (Tata), Queen, 29, 34
 Etheldreda (Etheldred) Audrey, Queen and Abbess, 83, 107, 122, 123, 126, 128, 129, 182
 Ethelfrid, King, 22, 31, 32, 34, 54
 Ethelfred, King, 143, 162, 178
 Ethelwalch, King, 132, 138, 140
 Ethelwald, King, 72, 76, 80
 Eumer, 35
 Europe, 172
 Exeter, 137

FARNE, Island of, 63, 69, 154, 157, 158
 Felix, S., Bishop, 45, 63, 64, 65, 84, 191
 Finan, Bishop, 75, 76, 86
 Forth, the, 42
 France, 3, 83, 101, 119, 146
 Frigga, 48, 49, 51
 Friesland (Frisia), 130, 134, 135, 136, 137, 177
 Fursey, S., monk, 64, 150

GAUL, 3, 147
 Germany, 134, 137
 Glen, the River, 43
 Gloucestershire, 19
 Goodmanham (Godmundingaham), 40
 Gospel, S. John's, 187
 Grantchester, 128
 Gregorian Chant, the, in Roman and Canterbury Method, 84, 148, 163, 172
 Gregory the Great, Pope, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 15, 16, 18, 27, 29, 31, 42, 111

HADRIAN, Abbott, 101, 102, 145, 171
 Hatfield, battle of, 45, 52, 54, 191
 Hatfield, Council of, 143, 144, 145, 147, 148, 149, 152, 192
 Heavenfield, battle of, 54, 58, 68, 191
 Heddi, Bishop, 164
 Herbert, hermit priest, the, 157
 Hereford, see of, 163, 165
 Hertford, Council of, 111, 123, 124, 144, 160, 163, 192
 Hewald, the brothers, 136, 137
 Hexham, see of, etc., 68, 122, 123, 124, 146, 154, 155, 156, 165, 176, 179, 185
 Hilda, S., Abbess, 89, 91, 92, 93, 97, 124
 Honorius, Archbishop, 44, 45, 65, 84, 191
 Humber, the, 8, 9, 42, 44

IDLE, the River, 34
 Idleton, 34
 Imma, 149
 India, 102, 137
 Innocent, Pope, 169
 Iona, island and monastery, 23, 54, 55, 56, 58, 63, 86, 135, 169
 Ireland, 23, 55, 58, 63, 88, 130, 175
 Isaac, 149
 Isidore, Bishop, 187
 Italy, 7
 Ithamar, 65, 191

JAMES, the Deacon, 42, 46, 52, 84, 122, 172
 Jarrow, S. Paul's monastery, 148, 149, 171, 182, 183, 189
 Jesus, 149
 John, the Abbot, 144, 145, 147, 148
 John, S., Gospel. *See* Gospel
 John, S., 86, 88
 John, S., of Beverley (Hexham), Bishop, 179, 185
 Jonah, 135
 Justus, Archbishop, 15, 24, 27, 28, 29, 31, 42, 44, 191

- KENT, 1, 7, 8, 9, 24, 26, 27, 28, 31, 42, 45, 46, 59, 63, 65, 67, 82, 83, 84, 100, 105, 117, 120, 122, 132, 141, 162, 163, 165, 172, 173
 Kenwalch, King, 79, 82, 85, 112, 163, 181
 Kynegils, 66
- LASTINGHAM ABBEY, 77, 78, 104, 105, 108, 182
 Laurance, Archbishop, 15, 23, 25, 27, 28, 29, 191
 Leicester, *see of*, 162, 165
 Lichfield, *see of*, 107, 108, 120, 160, 161, 162, 165, 192
 Lilla, 35
 Lincoln, 44, 67
 Lindhard, 7
 Lindisfarne, *see of*, 56, 61, 67, 75, 82, 84, 86, 87, 89, 111, 117, 118, 124, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 158, 165, 176, 191, 192
 Lindsey (Lincoln), *see of*, 124, 143, 162, 165
 Lindsey (Lincolnshire), 68, 125, 143, 161, 162
 Loki, 48, 51
 London, city and *see*, 9, 15, 24, 27, 28, 75, 76, 103, 111, 112, 115, 163, 165, 173, 191
 London, S. Paul's Cathedral, 24, 103
 Lothere, 112, 164
 Lyons, 118, 119
- MARTIN's, S., Church. *See* Canterbury, Rome
 Mary, the Virgin, 147
 Maserfield, Battle of, 67, 68, 191
 Mellitus, Archbishop, 15, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 75, 99, 115, 191
 Melrose Abbey, 87, 150, 152
 Mercia, King of, 45, 64, 65, 66, 67, 74, 76, 81, 99, 105, 120, 124, 131, 143, 160, 161, 162, 163, 165, 176, 178, 179, 191
 Michael, the Archangel, 178
 Monkswearmouth (Wearmouth), S. Peter's Abbey, 146, 149, 171, 182, 185, 189, 192
- Monothelism, 144
 Moses, 149
- NICÆA, Council of, 88
 Nidd, Council near the river of, 179
 Norfolk, 45
 Northumbria, King, 23, 29, 34, 37, 44, 46, 50, 52, 54, 56, 58, 65, 66, 69, 70, 79, 81, 84, 88, 111, 138, 141, 142, 143, 144, 160, 162, 165, 173, 175, 176, 178, 179, 191
 Norwich, *see of*, 114, 165
 Nottinghamshire, 44
- ODIN (Woden), 48, 49
 Oswald, S., King, vii, 52, 54, 55, 58, 59, 60, 61, 63, 64, 66, 67, 68, 70, 71, 72, 74, 79, 80, 97, 111, 129, 139, 140, 191
 Oswin, S., King, 70, 71, 72, 76
 Oswy, King, 70, 72, 74, 75, 77, 80, 81, 84, 88, 97, 100, 101, 105, 111, 119, 123
 Oundle, 179
 Owain, 107, 108
- PALL, the, 15, 29, 46
 Pallinsburn, 43
 Pancras, S., 16
 Pancras, S., Church of. *See* Canterbury
 Paris, 7
 Paul, S., 101, 132, 139, 186
 Paul's, S., Cathedral. *See* London
 Paulinus, S., Archbishop, 15, 29, 31, 35, 37, 39, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 54, 56, 58, 65, 67, 84, 91, 121, 131, 191
 Peada, sub-king, 73, 75, 81
 Penda, King, 45, 48, 52, 54, 64, 65, 66, 67, 69, 70, 74, 75, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 141, 162
 Peter, S., 27, 87, 88, 124, 139
 Peter the Monk, 15
 Peter's, S. *See* Rome
 Peter's, S., and S. Paul's Abbey. *See* Canterbury
 Picts, the, 124, 130, 175
 Pippin, Duke, 135, 136, 137
 Prussia, Rhenish, 136
 Purgatory, 149
 Putta, Bishop, 112, 162, 163

RADBOD, King, 135
 Redwald, King, 31, 32, 33, 34, 39, 45
 Retford, 34
 Rhine, the, 137
 Ripon, abbey and see, 86, 105, 119, 120, 121, 124, 130, 143, 146, 148, 165, 176, 179
 Rochester, see, 24, 28, 29, 46, 65, 112, 162, 165, 191
 Rome, city and apostolic see, 4, 7, 15, 27, 54, 66, 88, 100, 101, 112, 117, 118, 119, 130, 131, 136, 141, 144, 145, 147, 148, 152, 178, 179, 180
 Rome, S. Andrew's monastery, 7, 16, 118
 Rome, S. Martin's Church, 147
 Rome, S. Peter's, 141, 147

SABERT (Seban), King, 24, 26
 Sathryd, Abbess, 83
 Salisbury, see of, 165
 Sandwich, 120
 Saxons, East. *See* Essex
 Saxons, West. *See* Wessex
 Saxulf, Bishop, 161, 162
 Scotland, 55
 Scots, the, 130
 Sebbi, King, 99, 102
 Selsey, see, 138, 141, 164, 165
 Sexburga, Queen and Abbess, 83, 128
 Sherborne, see, 164, 165
 Sigebert, King (East Anglia), 45, 63, 64, 67, 80
 Sigebert, King (Essex), 75, 76
 Sigeward, Earl, 50
 Sotere, 48
 Somerset, 166
 Stubbs, Bishop, 172
 Suffolk, 45
 Sussex, 82, 119, 131, 132, 140, 141, 142, 165, 166, 173, 180, 192
 Swale, the River, 43
 Swidbert, Bishop, 136

TARSUS, 101, 167
 Tata. *See* Ethelburga, Queen
 Tees, the River, 6

Thames, the River, 24, 26
 Thanet, Isle of, 9
 Theodore, Archbishop, 99, 101, 102, 104, 105, 107, 111, 112, 113, 114, 120, 122, 124, 125, 136, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 148, 152, 155, 156, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 176, 177, 179, 192
 Thomas, S., of Canterbury, 177
 Thor, 48, 49
 Tilbury (Tilaburgh), 77
 Titullus, the scribe, 113
 Tiw, 48, 49
 Trent, the River, 81
 Tufa, the, 44
 Tweed, the River, 43, 152
 Twyford, the Synod of, 155

UTRECHT, 136

VIATICUM, the, 92, 96, 139

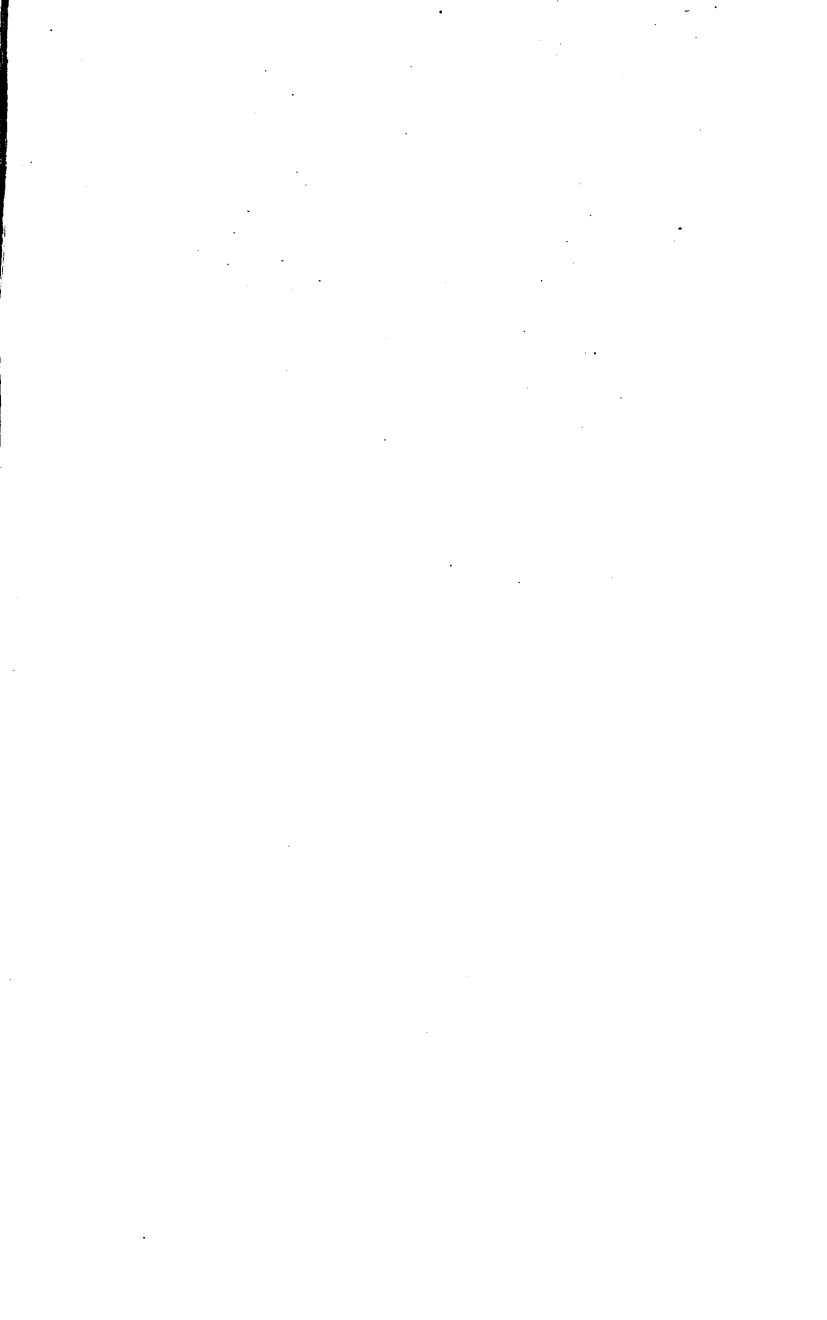
WALES, 2, 82, 166
 Wessex (West Saxons), kingdom, 35, 66, 79, 82, 85, 86, 112, 132, 140, 141, 162, 163, 164, 165, 176, 181, 191
 Whitby, Council of, 19, 84, 85, 88, 92, 99, 100, 104, 111, 119, 123, 124, 192
 Whitby, monastery and town, 77, 91, 92, 97, 116, 169
 Wighard, Archbishop, 100, 111
 Wight, Isle of, 140, 142
 Wilfrid, S., Bishop, viii, 86, 87, 88, 104, 105, 112, 114, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 128, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 138, 140, 141, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 152, 154, 158, 160, 161, 164, 165, 172, 173, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 192
 Willibrord, S. Clement, Archbishop, 130, 135, 136, 137
 Winchester, see, 86, 104, 112, 141, 163, 164, 165
 Winfrid, Bishop, 112, 114, 160, 161
 Winfrid. *See* Boniface, S.

- Wini, Bishop, 86, 104, 112, 115,
163, 165
Winwidfield, Battle of, 80, 81, 191
Winwæd, the stream, 80
Worcester, see, 162, 165
Wodin. *See* Odin
Wulfhere, King, 81, 99, 105, 132

YEVERING, 42
York Cathedral, 41, 45, 121, 124,
146, 156

York, city and see, 15, 40, 41, 43,
45, 46, 56, 84, 88, 104, 119,
120, 121, 123, 124, 125, 130,
160, 165, 176, 178, 179, 185,
192
York, school at, 171
Yorkshire, 6, 35, 43, 45, 177
Ythancæstre, 77

ZUYDER ZEE, the, 130



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